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ISSUE is now joined, on paper at least, between the Irish Free State and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. The controversy over the Oath is, no doubt, very serious; but it has large elements of the ridiculous in it. Mr. De Valera declares that the Oath is an "intolerable burden to the people of the Free State." Well, well! And all it consists in is members of the Dail signing their names in a book! Mr. Thomas stands fast on the Treaty Settlement—an admirable position, but unfortunately ineffective from the point of view of defeating Mr. De Valera, since there do not appear to be any sanctions that can be applied by H.M. Government in the United Kingdom. If the Free State is determined to secede from the British Commonwealth, nothing short of war will prevent it—and war is unthinkable. But we are not sure the Free State does want to secede; Mr. De Valera himself seems desirous of having it both ways. Perhaps the remonstrances and admonitions of the other Dominions will persuade him after all to tolerate the "intolerable burden."

* * *

The German Government has dealt a swift and heavy blow at the Nazis. The decree ordering the disbandment of Hitler's private army was signed on Wednesday night, and within a few hours the police were raiding the "Brown" headquarters and "Storm-troop" barracks all over the country. This step had been under contemplation for some time, and many people thought it had been far too long deferred; but few expected it to be taken so dramatically on the morrow of President von Hindenburg's re-election. We can only as yet guess at its results. It may not be easy to stamp out this great military organisation of 400,000 men; but presumably the Government feels reasonably safe in taking the risk of resistance. From a political point of view, it may not do Hitler much harm; indeed, it may improve his chances in the coming elections, for whilst one side will acclaim it as a sign of strength on the part of Dr. Brüning, the other can interpret it as weakness.

* * *

Sir Samuel Hoare told us a few weeks ago that there was no censorship in India for "responsible foreign correspondents." Quite. But less favoured people are evidently in a very different case. A document circulated by the Political Department of the Government of Bengal to the Hindu press has come into our hands, and the following extracts are illuminating. After a reminder that the publication

of matter which assists the activities of the Working Committee of Congress or other unlawful associations is an offence under the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908, and that the Emergency Powers Ordinance of 1932 gave the Government power "to regulate the press to prevent the furtherance of the civil disobedience movement," the circular proceeds to give "more detailed instructions for the guidance of all concerned." It is pointed out that the Ordinance

> enables the local Government or any authorised officer to take action against those concerned in the production of any newspaper if the matter published appears to be in furtherance of a movement prejudicial to the public safety. It is within the power of the Government or the officer acting under this section to require the editor, publisher and printer to refrain from publishing objectionable matter. It is also within the power of Government or the officer acting under this section to require the above persons to publish, in such manner as may be directed, correct reports of political events and notices or advertisements which counteract incorrect reports or notices or advertisements which have the effect of furthering the civil disobedience movement. In serious cases, orders may be passed for the suspension of publication of an offending newspaper. Any disobedience of such an order is liable to a penalty not exceeding two years' imprisonment and a fine under Section 21 of the Ordinance.

* * *

The circular then gives "instances of the class of matter the publication of which would be considered by Government to require action under one or more of the provisions of law quoted above":

> (1) Congress propaganda of any kind, including messages from persons arrested.
>
> (2) Any messages issuing or purporting to issue from persons confined in jail.
>
> (3) Any immoderate criticisms of Government or Government officials.
>
> (4) Any exaggerated reports of political events. This includes the extravagant use of headlines and the setting up or the placing in juxtaposition of news items in such a manner as to further the civil disobedience movement by giving an exaggerated impression of excitement in the country.
>
> (5) Any notices or advertisements of meetings, processions or other activities intended to promote civil disobedience.
>
> (6) Any photographs of persons taking part in Congress activities or of any incidents relating to such activities.

The circular concludes in a pleasantly ironical vein: "The above illustrations are not exhaustive but are intended to give some guidance to those concerned as to the kind of matter which might expose them to penalties. At the same time Government wish it to be understood that they have no desire to interfere with honest journalism and have no wish to penalise occasional and unintentional inclusion of undesirable matter in a paper which is ordinarily well-conducted."

* * *

Discussions at Geneva are now turning on "qualitative" disarmament; that is to say, the reduction of certain types of weapon as against the reduction of total forces. The United States came out on Monday with a proposal for the abolition of heavy mobile guns, tanks and gas, and Signor Grandi later proposed to extend the list by including bombing planes, submarines, capital ships and aircraft carriers. The opposition is led by the French, who have taken the American suggestion very ill. It is, they say, a deliberate trick on the part of the United States to isolate France. M. Tardieu marshalled the objections and argued for his own familiar thesis in a clever speech, in which he pointed out the difficulties of trying to distinguish between offensive and defensive armaments, and complained that each nation wanted to scrap those weapons which matter least to itself and most to others. There is some truth in this criticism and, *pace* M. Tardieu, it applies to France as well as the rest. Mr. Litvinov again pressed the Soviet demand for a substantial all-round reduction on "progressive and proportional principles." This is good sense—but too good, we fear, for the jealous and timid Governments who are fencing to-day at Geneva.

* * *

The Four Power Conference last week resulted in a first-class fiasco. We need not recall all the weaknesses of the proposed Danubian Federation. It was plain from the outset that the differences of opinion and of interest went too deep for any agreement to be reached on the French plan. Germany and Italy were both profoundly suspicious of France, as indeed was everybody, save perhaps our guileless Foreign Secretary. Neither of them was in the least disposed to a customs union which excluded them or which, as they had ample reason to expect, might operate to damage their trade. And so all M. Tardieu's efforts were wasted and a quick end was made of the French scheme for helping Europe to help France. The problem of the bankrupts has now been passed to Geneva, where it had better have gone in the first instance. There is little likelihood of the League's reviving the Danubian Federation project. But the Council is faced with the report of its Financial Committee on Austria and Hungary and Bulgaria and Greece. Nothing will be done about this till May, and when May comes the whole matter will probably be left over to see what happens at the Lausanne Conference, which meets in June to consider other "economic consequences of the peace." Meanwhile these miserable countries struggle on with their budget deficits, their debts and trade restrictions, their taxes and their cut-throat tariffs.

* * *

The second reading of the Sunday Cinemas Bill produced the unimpressive majority of eighteen (235 votes to 217). Had the Bill been competently opposed, it might even have been defeated. As things are, it now goes to a Standing Committee, where, no doubt, it will be scientifically obstructed and, in view of the narrow majority obtained on Wednesday, its future may well be regarded as precarious. The withdrawal of the Bill—which would mean that in a few months' time Sunday cinemas would close altogether—would in our view be deplorable. It would solve no problems, either from the point of view of the hard-boiled Sabbatarian or from that of anyone else, and it would create a number of new ones, since the Sunday cinema serves as an anodyne for those latent discontents which otherwise must fester dangerously or else be drowned in beer. The time, indeed, may come when compulsory cinema-going is advocated for the masses. In the meantime, the timidity of our M.P.s under pressure from their more vociferous constituents is once again in evidence. Local caucuses of puritanical Die-hards have worked strenuously for the defeat of the Bill, and they may yet have more to show for their efforts than the

cynical plaudits of the middle-classes, who are indifferent, in the main, to the opening (or closing) of churches and cinemas alike.

* * *

How long can the United States, if the present depression lasts, continue to stand out against the growing demand for a national system of maintenance for the unemployed? In New York the Commissioner of Public Welfare has just issued a despairing appeal. There are 828,000 persons in the city in receipt of relief, which is confined to the most simple and nourishing kinds of food. The $18,000,000 raised as an emergency fund by a public appeal has all been spent; and the $12,500,000 voted by the city will very soon also be gone. About $75,000 a day is being spent by the Department of Public Welfare "merely to feed people who would otherwise have nothing to eat"; and "the proven increase in destitution seems to be extending . . . week by week." Yet America, despite budgetary difficulties, has immense reserves of taxable capacity still untouched, and among its population highly inflammable elements not likely to be indefinitely patient under adversity or to show respect for the law. Presumably the great American cities will be left to scrape through the summer somehow. But it looks as if next autumn would bring with it an irresistible demand for more adequate help, unless the tide turns—and of that, despite the talk of "reflation," there is still no sign.

* * *

In Great Britain the attempt to provide employment by means of public works has dropped into the background since the fiasco under Mr. Thomas, and still more since the advent of the "National" Government pledged to economy at any price. But on the Continent the policy which Mrs. Webb and her colleagues preached here long ago in the famous Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission appears to be gaining ground. For some time past the International Labour Office has been trying to stir up the various Governments to institute schemes of public work; and an unofficial body at Geneva, the Unclaimed Wealth Utilisation Committee, has been doing a good deal of propaganda in its favour. By the "unclaimed wealth" is meant the available resources which ought to be put to productive use, but in fact are not. Like the I.L.O., it urges Governments to remedy the refusal of private capitalists to promote enterprise through investment by public borrowing to be applied to productive schemes. It wants this movement to be international, and to be made the means of raising the price-level through a simultaneous expansion of credit in different countries; and it wants the creditor nations to lend to the more backward parts of Europe for railway-building and other forms of economic development. The whole question will come up at the session of the I.L.O. now in progress at Geneva; and a number of European Governments have already expressed themselves in reply to an I.L.O. circular as in favour of an extension of public work schemes as a means of combating unemployment.

* * *

Parliament has been busy this week with the Bill extending transitional payments for the unemployed for another year; and naturally the discussion has turned largely on the working of the Means Test. But the Opposition, even though it has been reinforced for the occasion by a few of the young Tories, has got no change out of Sir Henry Betterton, who simply bids his critics wait until the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance has reported, but, properly enough, will give no pledge to carry out its still unknown recommendations. Meanwhile the scandal of the Means Test—for it is no less—goes on. Of two men or women in precisely the same circumstances, but in different areas, one is granted and the other refused benefit. There are gross discrepancies in the numbers struck off in different districts; and men who over long years have paid into the Insurance Fund without taking anything out of it are now finding their claims exhausted, and the test applied to scale their payments down, or remove them altogether. Though the Government pays for transitional benefit, the striking off of claimants is putting new burdens on the Poor Law, especially in the most depressed areas; and authorities such as Merthyr are at their wits' end to carry on.

* * *

The Trade Returns for March, reflecting as they do the results of the first month's trading under the ægis of the Import Duties Act, are naturally of exceptional interest. Comparisons with February (a month in which importations were much swollen by the rushing-in of commodities in anticipation of the duties) are not very illuminating; they show a falling off of imports by no less than £9 millions, as compared with a very slight increase in exports. Comparisons with March, 1931, are more significant. These show a drop in imports of nearly £9.5 millions, while exports are down by just under £3 millions—a gain from the point of view of the "visible adverse balance," of £6.5 millions. The imports affected are, of course, in the main "manufactured and semi-manufactured" articles. The correction of our economic ills is not, however, as easy as all this. For one thing, it will be some months before the repercussions upon exports of restricted imports begin to show themselves—a high proportion of our "manufactured" imports are actually raw materials; for another, the rise in prices attributable to the duties will tend to restrict purchasing power and will thus aggravate our internal difficulties.

* * *

Our transition from a country in which trade was (more or less) free to a country of all-round protection has, on the whole, been carried out smoothly; but in many directions the petty annoyances which invariably accompany a tariff system are beginning to show themselves. Last week the assessment of duty on the flowers on Edgar Wallace's coffin (a macabre epilogue to his gallant fight for Free Trade at Blackpool) provoked much indignation. This week the Board of Customs has been grappling with the problem of live monkeys. Four-footed animals are exempt from duty, but the Board (with a singular lack of sympathy towards harmless homunculi who are probably wholehearted supporters of the Government) has decided that the monkeys must pay. Officially, their feet are all hands. Such is the penalty of Darwinism. We hope the Board's decision will be trounced as it deserves in Dayton, Tennessee.

THE FAR EASTERN PROBLEM

GENEVA has begun to hum with business again this week. Old wrangles and new are occupying the Disarmament Conference; the Council of the League is struggling, not too hopefully, with the problem of the bankrupt States of central and southern Europe. And within a day or two—perhaps before these lines are in print—the Committee of Nineteen appointed by the Assembly will be at grips once more with its problem in the Far East. This question may look remote and relatively unimportant to Budapest and Athens, and even to London and Paris. But in reality it overshadows every other in the international field, and failure to settle it will not merely spell damage to the prestige of the League, but will bring a train of disasters on mankind.

The negotiations that have dragged on for so many weeks at Shanghai have now definitely broken down. The Japanese, though they have evacuated some of their forces, are still dug in on Chinese territory,-and they refuse to withdraw except on conditions which China will not and cannot fairly be asked to accept. There may be a renewal of the fighting—or there may not, for Japan has burnt her fingers badly in this Shanghai adventure, and can hope to gain nothing by pushing it further. But, fighting or no fighting, the invader remains in his position, defying the League of Nations and the United States, arguing and temporising, claiming the right to be a judge in his own cause, and preparing for the more important tussle which must come in Manchuria. It is Manchuria, as everyone knows, that matters to Japan. The landing at Shanghai was, if not an accident, an incident. The plan, such as it was, has miscarried. It did not, as the Japanese militarists expected it would, bring the Chinese Government to its knees; it was not cheap, and it redounded neither to the martial glory of Japan nor to her political credit. There remains only its possible value in the diplomatic game of bluffing and bargaining between Tokio and the world.

The stakes in that game are high. Japan has played both boldly and cunningly, from the original seizure of Manchuria down to the establishment of the puppet government of Mr. Henry P'u. She found the Chinese disunited and weak. She found Soviet Russia desperately anxious to keep out of trouble. She found America distracted by domestic affairs, and handicapped by isolation from the League. And she found the League, as represented by the politicians of the European Powers on the Council, timid in defence of the Covenant and all too ready to be fooled. She fooled them by as pretty a mixture of promises, threats, appeals and pretences as the history of diplomacy can show. It was only at long last that the obstinacy of the Chinese, the indignation of the United States, and the culminating outrages at Shanghai forced the Assembly to make a stand. The resolution of March 11th was the first serious check to the Japanese policy, and there were optimists who talked of mate in a few moves. But, alas! it has not proved so easy as all that, and the League and the United States (for they are, and must be, partners in this) have need of all their skill and courage to win.

The settlement of the dispute, let us be clear, must be based on the withdrawal of Japan not merely from Shanghai, but from Manchuria. The Three Provinces have been taken from China by force, in breach of the Covenant and the Nine-Power Treaty, and the offence and the loss are not condoned by the pretence that the natives of Manchuria have set up an "independent" National Government with which the Japanese are only in normal friendly relations, as they might be with the Government of Peru or Patagonia. Mr. P'u and his Manchu ministers and officials have been put there by Japan. They are kept there by Japanese arms, and they are financed by Japanese money. They have recently received a loan of twenty million yen without interest for five years—not, of course, from the Japanese Government, but from the private but eminently patriotic firms of Mitsui and Mitsubishi. Now this thinly camouflaged annexation of a great piece of China is not simply a violation of international law and pledges from which no serious practical consequences need be anticipated. It is fraught with immense and certain dangers. It does not even promise the advantages which some short-sighted cynics have predicted. The Chinese could never ensure order and prosperity in Manchuria, we have been told; but the Japanese can. Can they indeed? Only if both the Manchurian people and China acquiesce in the Japanese control—which neither does. The "bandit" fiction no longer deceives a schoolboy, and the Japanese themselves admit to national resistance in the country on a formidable scale. As for China in general, who can doubt either her intention or her power to offer an implacable opposition?

From a military point of view, China may be contemptible, though the defence of Shanghai has changed some opinions on that point. But the weapon of the boycott cannot be treated lightly. It has been used alike in the past and in the present crisis with deadly effect. There was a nine months' boycott as long ago as 1908 which damaged Japanese trade to the amount of thirteen million dollars. Another, in protest against the Twenty-One Demands in 1915 cost Japan $18,000,000, another from 1919 to 1922 about $115,000,000, and a fourth in 1925 $34,000,000. The present boycott is still more serious. Exports to China showed last year, according to the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, a drop of 64 per cent., and astronomical figures are given us of piles of goods, textiles, coal, paper and others, held up and unmarketable. The products of "Honourable Miss Silkworm," too, are not going as they should to the United States. The public finances of Japan are in a pickle; unemployment is growing, and with it wage cuts and social distress and discontent. Sitting tight in Manchuria offers no remedy for this state of affairs; it can only worsen it. Nor is the paralysing of Japanese trade all that has to be reckoned with. A widespread boycott and guerrilla fighting are not likely to do much good to other people's trade in China. And what of the political consequences? The relations of Japan and the United States may be strained to snapping. If Anglo-Japanese relations remain friendly, through the complaisance of the British Government, then Anglo-American and Anglo-Chinese relations will suffer. Russia is at present out of the picture; but for how long will she be able to remain out, and what are we to look for if she comes in? What will be the

effects presently in India of Japanese imperialism entrenched under Mr. P'u's umbrella in China? And what are the prospects of disarmament?

These are the issues that the League has to face. If its members—and particularly Great Britain, on whose attitude so much depended—had faced them resolutely a few months ago, we do not believe things would have come to their present pass. There were risks in showing a firm front to aggression; but they ought to have been taken. And they must be taken now, for they are the lesser risks. We hope that the Committee of Nineteen, together with the United States, will demand the submission of Japan, quite definitely and within a time limit, so far as Shanghai is concerned, and with a clear intimation that sanctions will be applied if the demand is not complied with. We hope they will make it plain that their writ, and not Tokio's, is going to run in Manchuria. The Lytton Commission may help to get Japan out on face-saving terms, and it may help to ensure the remedying of her legitimate grievances. It must not, however it reports, be used for justifying her robbery. But if these hopes are to be realised, the British Government will have to show a little more of the lion and a little less of the domestic cat. Sir John Simon has done his worst. Mr. MacDonald is going to Geneva next week. Can we look to him to retrieve the reputation of this country and to take the lead in a firm and far-sighted policy in the Far East?

BROWN SHIRTS AND IRON FRONT

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT LATELY IN BERLIN]

GERMANY is the experimental laboratory of Europe by virtue of her geographical position and the variety of her resources, and because the Peace Treaties have intensified, in Germany, the general problems of 1932. The Presidential Election, immediately followed by the dissolution of Hitler's "Brown Army," and the imminent Landtag Elections make this spring unusually instructive.

One has scarcely had to be in Germany for twenty-four hours to realise that the Presidential Election of 1925 belonged to another age before the Great Collapse, and may, therefore, be regarded as wholly irrelevant; but the Reichstag Elections of September, 1930, and several Landtag Elections since then, provide ample material for comparison.

Last autumn, with the bank crash behind and the winter ahead, it looked as if extremism must win and, despite the Chancellor's determination, "moderatism" must vanish. But now three interesting facts are emerging—Hitlerism cannot stand success, Communism is at best at a standstill, and there is a new patriotism among Moderates.

However wild the Hitlerite prophecies may have been, it is important not to belittle the increase in Nazi votes from over six million (out of a total of 34¼ million votes) in September, 1930, to over eleven million (out of a total of 37½ million votes) in the first Presidential ballot on March 13th, 1932, *i.e.*, from 18 per cent. to 30 per cent. of the votes given. It was inevitable that when Düsterberg, the Nationalist candidate in the first ballot, stood down his 2½ million votes should mostly go to Hitler in the second ballot on April 10th. Since the break-up of the Harzburg Front (Nationalists and Nazis) Hitler had been gaining at Nationalist expense. Last Sunday he therefore polled well over 13 million votes. This increase in four weeks, while it means nothing new, is a great psychological score in a rather hysterical game.

What is this so-called "National Socialist Party of the Working Men of Germany," so eagerly supported by old ladies who have lost their inheritance and by young men who have nothing to inherit? What does it want? Where lies its strength? If you give the gravest attention to Hitler's speeches you can learn little but that he will never abandon the fight. Study his press and you will learn that he is a composite type of saint and hero, flavoured with the best of Marius, Christ, Washington, Napoleon and Mussolini. Listen to Goebbels, the master orator of Hitlerism, and it will easily become clear to you that Jews, Catholics, Capitalists, Communists, Trade Unions, and the Weimar Constitution by which Germany has been ruled since 1919 are defeatist and un-German and must be root and branch abolished. To the kindest investigator the twenty-five points of the party programme seem a little childish; not only are land and capital to be expropriated without definition, but profiteering—whatever that means—is to be a capital offence. Not only are the Peace Treaties to be scrapped, but Germany, having expelled all Jews and other non-Germans, is to be given more land. The party cannot, unfortunately, reveal its admirable remedy for the economic problems of the moment, because the Government would use the plan and steal the glory. The leaders affirm that they are working only for constitutional victory, while the police have recently discovered such elaborate military conspiracy plans in their offices that the Government has at last decided to suppress the Nazi forces. This "Brown Army" consisted of some 300,000 to 400,000 men organised on the model of the old Imperial Army; whether the beautifully drilled S.A. (Sturmabteilungen) and S.S. (Schutzstaffeln) were armed on a serious military scale is uncertain. It remains to be seen whether their dissolution can be enforced. No one can tell how far the Nazis have won the casting vote—should it come to violence—of the Reichswehr.

The idea of the revolt of Germanic youth against oppression abroad and avarice at home is still equipped as the comparable movement of the early nineteenth century never could have been. Here are enthusiasm and vitality as superbly organised as money and discipline can to-day achieve. And behind the demagogue and the pogromist are many intellectuals who wish to inflame this force until it masters the political arena: there will be time then, they hope, to educate the young men to something more than rowdy racialism.

On April 24th the Prussians are to elect their Landtag. (Landtag elections will occur in Bavaria, Würtemberg and Anhalt on the same day.) Prussia is the major portion of Germany, and all Germany's problems seem intensified in Prussia. In the West, industrial Westphalia and the Rhineland are strongly anti-Hitler, but in the agricultural North Pomerania and Schleswig-Holstein have just given Hitler his biggest successes. It is impossible to judge whether this election will inaugurate what many Germans regard as a new era—the Hitlerites speak of the coming of "das dritte Reich"—or whether the Nazis have already reached their zenith. Whoever forms the Prussian Government controls the Prussian police, whose remarkable efficiency keeps Berlin in comparative order.

The so-called Jewish press—*Berliner Tageblatt*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, etc.—is, of course, busy showing that Hitlerism is a bursting bubble, but it may not be wrong. Hitler propagandists have been first in the fields, and agriculture is still the biggest industry in Germany, but it is almost impossible that the peasants should remain faithful to the Nazi programme. There are signs that the great industrialists in the Ruhr are cutting down funds. Moreover, it is particularly significant that in Bavaria, Hessen, Hamburg and Thuringia, where the Nazis had hitherto been most successful (*e.g.*, in recent Landtag elections), the Presidential Election showed a decrease in the number of their supporters, although in Thuringia Hitler was top of the second poll. It bodes ill for a Revivalist movement if it cannot survive even local success. Even in Brunswick,

where the Nazi Minister, Klagges, is in the saddle and where there is more Nazi intimidation than elsewhere, Hitler only polled about 37½ per cent. of the votes in the first ballot and 44½ per cent. in the second, Hindenburg scoring 47 per cent. and just over 50 per cent., respectively.

The value of the figures polled on April 10th has been lessened by the almost certainty that many Communists then voted Nazi; if this habit grows the whole situation will become far more volcanic. The ill-success of the Communists on March 13th was already admitted by the Red Press both in Berlin and Moscow. Grim emergency decrees, increasing hardship and the proximity of Communist Russia had suggested that the advance shown in September, 1930, would accelerate. The treachery of the Social Democrats in conniving at the virtual dictatorship of the Catholic Chancellor, the conspicuous breakdown of capitalistic finance, should have made magnificent propaganda. But while 3,235,104 more people voted on March 13th than in September, 1930, only 391,626 more Communist votes were registered. At least two explanations suggest themselves. First the folly of Communist strategy; "the Party" is hopelessly perplexed as to whether it is fighting Hitlerism or Social Democracy or merely the powers that be. *Pravda* on March 16th expressed the prevailing confusion of thought. "The Communists," it wrote, "set themselves the task of proving to the masses with all possible clarity that Social Democracy is the chief obstacle to the destruction of Capitalism and in the fight against Fascist dictatorship." The result is a futile protest against everything. Thälmann was put up for the Presidency as a matter of principle, while undoubtedly some of his sympathisers voted for Hindenburg in order to keep out Hitler and some for Hitler to hasten the crisis. On April 10th the Communist vote fell from 4,982,079 (March 13th) to 3,706,388, and an examination of the voting makes it clear that Hitler gained from Thälmann.

Secondly the Trade Unions are astonishingly true to Social Democracy and the Weimar Republic, which is to some extent their Republic, and whose ministers in this last winter have organised relief with unquestionable efficiency. The German working-man is slow and sure; he rather bears those ills he has than flies to others that he knows not of; he is proud of the traditions of German Socialism; although his theories are largely Marxist he despises Russians, and he does not feel convinced that patriotism is a bourgeois monopoly. Many of these men are now organised in the Reichsbanner, the army of the "Iron Front" for the defence of the Republic against violence. Coming largely from the same social strata as the police, the Reichsbanner would work well with the "Schuppos" (bobbies) in a crisis.

To a large extent Hitler has made the strange and uneasy *mariage de convenance* between the Social Democrats and the Catholic Centre Party. These two Bismarck held to be the enemies of the Germany he had united, but it is they who are holding the Republic together. That their candidate for the Presidency should have been the best-known general of imperial Germany makes the situation still more bizarre. They have been supported by the smaller parties such as the Deutsche Volkspartei, the Staatspartei, etc. In September, 1930, these moderate groups together obtained a million and a half more votes (20,850,254) than Hindenburg on April 10th, 1932 (19,359,642), but those votes were given to parties and these to Germany, and two disastrous winters have intervened. This spring one has a new feeling of the solidity of the Germans as a political entity, and as fairly sensible creatures, most of them, in the face of every conceivable obstacle to unity or sense. Even a year ago there was no focus for reasonable patriotism. The other day when the Republicans tried to rally their supporters with the cry "On to the final victory! The enemies of democracy are beaten!" they got more than their enemies' ridicule; democracy is beside the point. Brüning's is at best what the French call a plebiscitary dictatorship. But Hindenburg and the Iron Front have created—for the time—a new patriotism standing for conservation, continuity and no more coercion than is legal, with such standing in Europe as these things alone can provide. It is something like a tragedy that their financial policy is at present purely negative.

E. WISKEMANN.

ANOTHER MONETARY THEORY

DR. ROBERT EISLER, who has recently been lecturing in this country, is the latest recruit to the growing band of writers who know how to remedy all our troubles by means of a simple surgical operation on the currency. His book,* written with torrential positiveness and wealth of illustration, has something in common with the writings of Major Douglas, and is calculated to make a similar appeal. But it differs from Douglasism in that its author's approach is essentially international and his remedy conceived in international terms. And it also differs in that Dr. Eisler does not aim at reducing the price-level, but at stabilising it on an international basis.

Dr. Eisler's positive proposals are not always very clearly expressed or easy to follow. But the gist of his plan appears to be this. Each country is in future to have two different kinds of money—current money, and money of account. Current money will be used for small transactions and for paying wages, while all other payments will be made by means of bank money. The purchasing power of bank money will be absolutely stabilised in relation to retail prices, but that of current money will not. In other words, a unit of bank money will exchange for more or less current money according as prices rise or fall. This will secure that debtors and creditors will stand to pay or receive at any time the same real value as the loan represented when it was made.

The value of bank money, stable in purchasing power, will vary in relation to gold. But this will not involve fluctuating exchange rates; for Dr. Eisler proposes to "peg" the international exchanges by a double method. They are to be artificially protected against short-term fluctuations and speculation by the mutual granting by each Central Bank to each other of gold exchange credits, which can be used to ensure short-term stability as the sterling-dollar exchange was artificially "pegged" during the war. This, to be sure, will not secure long-term stability; but Dr. Eisler believes it can be secured if all the Governments and Central Banks make an international agreement to expand their monetary circulation in equal proportions, in such a way as to secure the full employment of all available productive resources.

The method of doing this is the central point of Dr. Eisler's scheme. The proportion in which the circulation is to be expanded having been internationally agreed, each Central Bank is to credit the Treasury of its country with the additional money, which the Government will then be free to spend. It can use this additional income (*a*) to balance the Budget, thus avoiding retrenchment in expenditure; (*b*) to institute public works, thus providing additional employment and creating fresh purchasing power; (*c*) when its productive resources are fully employed, in raising wages and salaries, pensions, etc., so as to add to the supply of consuming power.

As these bank credits to the Treasuries are not to be repayable, the result will be a huge progressive addition to the supply of money. This, Dr. Eisler recognises, will cause prices to rise, in terms of current money. But *ex hypothesi* they will not rise in terms of bank money; for it is to be stable in purchasing power. Accordingly,

* *This Money Maze. A Way Out of the World Economic Crisis.* By Dr. Robert Eisler. Search Publishing Co. 1s.

the rate of exchange between bank money and current money will alter, current money being worth less and less bank money as prices rise. But as all countries will be doing the same thing to the same extent, their exchanges in terms of bank money will not be upset. At least, this is Dr. Eisler's view. Long-term stability of exchange rates, for bank money, will be ensured by the proportionate expansion of this money in all countries.

Dr. Eisler is very confident that this system, internationally adopted, will cure all the world's troubles. At some points he seems to contemplate world-wide action, including all countries: at others, action by the countries of the British Empire and such others as are prepared to act with them, to the exclusion of the gold standard countries. It is never made clear to which of these situations his main proposals are meant to apply. Perhaps he holds that, if the British Empire initiates action, all countries will speedily have to join in.

Dr. Eisler's scheme is evidently in essence a project of internationally agreed inflation. But he believes that international inflation is not open to the same objections as national inflation, because it does not involve exchange disturbances. If bank money is everywhere stabilised in purchasing power, the main objection to inflation is revived. But what would be the effect of his scheme on the internal distribution of purchasing power within each country? Wages, we are told, are to be paid in current money; but presumably their amount in this money is to be varied each week so as to equal a given amount of bank money. Wages, like other contractual payments, are thus to be stabilised in purchasing power, except to the extent that they are raised through grants from the Treasury out of the credits transferred to it by the bank. There will be more effective purchasing power in the total, because there will be more employment and production; but the existing distribution will be preserved, except to the extent to which it is deliberately altered by the State's use of its new credits to raise wages or to lighten taxation. So far, so good.

Of course, the substance of Dr. Eisler's plan rests on three opinions; first, that more money must be put into circulation in order to cure unemployment, and that the money must be directed in the first instance mainly to the purchase of consumable goods; secondly, that no one country can pursue the policy of inflation alone, for fear of the results on its international position, and of a flight of capital; and, thirdly, that currency expansion must be so managed as not to upset the real value of contractual obligation, or the distribution of income between class and class. He proposes to set expansion to work by his issue of *gratis* bank credits to the Treasury; to do this internationally, in order to preserve exchange stability; and to draw a distinction between bank money and current money, stabilising the purchasing power of the one, but not of the other, in order to preserve the real value of contracts.

The root question is this. Are the credits granted to the Treasury to be credits in current money or in bank money? If they are credits in current money, they will only depress the value of current money in relation to bank money, *i.e.*, raise prices, without causing any addition at all to the real supply of purchasing power. They must, then, be credits in bank money, convertible into current money at a variable rate. But if the supply of bank money is to be increased, how can its purchasing power be kept stable? It can, as long as the supply of goods and services can be increased to the same extent. But beyond that point the supply of bank money can only be increased at the expense of lowering its purchasing power. But this is assumed to be fixed under Dr. Eisler's scheme.

It is true that, subsequently, the supply of money can be further increased, as fast as national productivity rises, so as to make possible a larger supply of goods without higher costs. But surely productivity cannot be assumed to be increasing at the same rate in all countries; and accordingly a uniform addition to these supplies of bank money will not have in all countries the same results. But unless it does prices in terms of bank money cannot be kept stable, or rates of exchange pegged.

Even in relation to the present situation, is the real need for a *uniform* percentage addition to the present monetary circulation in all countries? Surely not. Dr. Eisler suggests that the French, having less unemployment than others, should use their extra money to raise wages. But can they do this and keep the value of their money stable unless they can increase production as much as other countries with more unemployment? Dr. Eisler says that the higher wages being paid by the State out of its credits will not raise costs. But how is more bank money of stable purchasing power to be spent unless there is a proportionate addition to the supply of goods and services?

In effect, countries would not agree all to increase their monetary supply in the same proportion; and, if they did, the results foreseen by Dr. Eisler would not follow. There is no satisfactory automatic way of regulating the supply of money, either nationally or internationally; nor ought the supply to rise in the same proportion in all countries. But Dr. Eisler is quite right in holding that an addition to the supply of money is in every country essential if unemployment is to be kept within bounds, and that this addition ought, if possible, to be made by international agreement, though not everywhere to a uniform extent.

His proposal for a double currency raises more difficult questions. The object is to preserve the stability of the real value of contracts and of the purchasing power of international money. But are we sure we wish to do this? Do we not want the real value of debts to fall, to offset its great rise in recent years? Do we want to make the *rentiers* a permanent present of the results of past deflation? Dr. Eisler says, probably with truth, that France will come in on no other terms. But is not the price of French participation in that case too high? Let France have her two kinds of money if she chooses, for the benefit of her *rentiers*. Why should we?

Like much current monetary writing, Dr. Eisler's book is stimulating, but unclear at the vital points, and based on an over-simplification of the problem. I hope in this article I have not misunderstood his proposals; but if at any point I have I am inclined to say that it is his own fault. Certainly I should be delighted if he could convict me of error, and prove his scheme workable and sound. For I am very conscious that tearing up other people's monetary theories is no answer to those who urge, with the fullest truth, that the world's monetary arrangements are all wrong, and that it is vital to find sound ways of putting them right.

G. D. H. COLE.

NO APPLAUSE

DURING the last few days we have seen two further attempts in London to quench the public instinct for expressing its pleasure by means of applause. Dr. Adrian Boult, we are told, was so determined that there should be no applause in the Queen's Hall when he was conducting Bach's *Mass in B Minor* that at the end of the performance he kept his baton raised till the choir had begun to stream through the exits, and in this way he contrived to make the evening end in solemn silence. Again, those who have been present during the week at Herr Reinhardt's *Miracle* have been requested in a note on the programme not to applaud while the pageant is in progress.

I am one of those who believe that in all such matters the audience should be left to decide for itself. Human beings often cheer in the wrong places and laugh in the wrong places, but I would rather be irritated by inopportune cheering or laughter than be put under orders as to whether

I should cheer or not, as if I were living under the tyranny of the Incas of Peru. After all, most of us learn before we are very old when it is appropriate to cheer or to laugh and when it is not. The ordinary man does not make a noisy demonstration except when, from the general behaviour of his neighbours, it is clear that there is good cause for a noisy demonstration. To utter a full-throated yell of enthusiasm in a hall in which, apart from this, you could hear a pin or, at least, a threepenny-bit drop, and then to realise that you have uttered it, is an experience that even a brave man does not wish to live through twice. And the ordinary spectator in a theatre who begins a loud guffaw and finds that he is the only person present who has seen that particular joke makes desperate efforts to stop his guffaw in the middle. If everybody in a theatre dared to cheer or laugh when he wished to do so and when nobody else wished to do so, there would be angry scenes and forcible ejections of men who had offended the instincts of the community.

Hence, we find that the behaviour of audiences is almost always seemly except when a considerable section of the audience prefers that it should be unseemly. We neither boo nor laugh when our neighbours do not wish us to boo or laugh, and we have not the courage to cheer alone. In the theatre which I frequented when I was a boy, it was a common enough occurrence, if the hero kissed the heroine with particular tenderness, for some of the occupants of the pit to make loud smacking noises with their lips as if in imitation. Some of the audience cried "Hush!" at this, but others laughed as though the comedians in the pit were providing them with better entertainment than the sentimentalists on the stage. And, indeed, the comedians in the pit could not have indulged in their osculatory derision if they had been entirely without support. It must be said in their defence that they customarily reserved their demonstrations for pieces of sentimental twaddle, and I do not think I ever heard one of them breaking unduly into the ardent passions of Romeo and Juliet. Possibly, some of them wished to do so, for there is always a fool in a crowd, but the communal silence restrained them.

Within limits, however, most of us like to feel free to demonstrate our enjoyment and other emotions in public in so far as this is possible without interrupting the pleasure of others. A few hyperesthetic men and women are content to take all their pleasures in silence, but the natural, vulgar man wishes when he is enthusiastic in the company of other people to make a noise. You see this most clearly at a great football match. Go to a Cup Final, and you will hear strong men bawling themselves red in the face an hour before the match has begun. Suppose, however, that the Football Association issued an edict prohibiting buzzers and other instruments of torture, and announced that any spectator who cheered during the game would be instantly ejected. Into what a dismal conventicle of sport would Wembley be transformed! I doubt even whether, if the rule of silence during football matches could be imposed—and I am sure this would be impossible without machine-guns—you could ever again fill the Stadium. Men who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spoke, the faith and morals hold that Milton held, must be free to shout at a football match. And do not despise shouting. It is as true a piece of self-expression as the verse of a poet or as a painter's landscape. The human spirit is released. It soars upwards as in a song. The self-expression of the spectators at a game may lack some of the subtle qualities of the self-expression of the players. But only a man who is naturally or on principle hostile to crowds can remain unmoved and unexcited by it. Even I, who shrink from public gesticulation, have found myself standing with my hat in my hand and making strange noises with my smoker's throat largely because other people all round me were doing the same thing. I would not stand up and do such a thing alone for a ten-pound note, but I become valiantly indecorous in company. It must be remembered at the same time that a football crowd does not express itself all the time in a vulgar and monotonous fortissimo of roaring. There are as many delicate shades in roaring as there are in the lung-work of a singer. No one knows better how to practise the art of silence when silence is appropriate. Observe the hush that falls upon a Rugby crowd when a critical kick at goal is being taken. No church presents a spectacle of humanity more stilled into silence. It is not till the ball is on its way to the goal-posts that men feel free to draw their breaths and return to the plane of common existence.

Those who object to applause in concert-halls and theatres, however—and in recent years there have been objectors to applause during secular as well as religious and semi-religious performances—may contend that the arts belong to a sacred world of the imagination remote from the unspiritual world of games. No one, I suppose, will deny that there is a range and depth of delight to be got from *Hamlet* infinitely beyond any that could be got from even the greatest match at Twickenham. But I see in that no reason for denying lovers of the arts the right to express their enthusiasm in the fashion that pleases them best. There is nothing unholy in applause. When the Pope is borne ceremoniously into St. Peter's, the vast crowd in the church waves handkerchiefs and shouts "Long live the Pope!" till it is hoarse, while he makes the sign of the Cross to this side and to that. Again, I have often stood at a Salvation Army meeting at a street corner and heard the most sacred sentences interrupted with cries of "Hallelujah!" which is only a religious form of applause. These things suggest that reverence can be shown by noise as well as by silence; and by noise as well as by silence reverence of great work has been traditionally shown in the concert-hall and in the theatre. For the most part acclamation by noise has disappeared from the churches, but it is at least arguable that sermons would become more exciting and effective if they had not to be delivered in an atmosphere of silence that almost suggests indifference. Applause and laughter might establish a closer contact between the preacher and his audience. Whatever may be the truth about the churches, it is my settled opinion that in the theatre and in the concert-hall applause does the performers as well as the audience good.

It creates an atmosphere in which the performer feels that he is in touch with his audience and gains confidence in his power to play on it as on an instrument. Applause may be bad for him morally, ministering to his vanity, but, artistically, it is justified by results. For the sake of these results we can blind ourselves to the incongruity of Romeo and Juliet's rising from the tomb to hold hands and bow as bouquets of applause are flung at them for having died with such tragical nobility. Hamlet murmurs: "The rest is silence" all the more movingly if he is sure that the silence will be followed by four or five tumultuous calls before the curtain. Such incongruities are part of life, and part of art and the enjoyment of art. There may come a time when audiences are so refined that they will be able to hear the greatest music and the greatest dramatic poetry without the slightest physical display of emotion. But the time is not yet. To impose an unnatural solemnity on them through requests in the programmes is to do no service to the arts. It is to introduce a new and unnecessary kind of Puritanism and to interfere with one of the minor pleasures of human nature.

Y. Y.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN AGRICULTURE

THERE was a time when national co-operation was held to provide a cure for all the troubles that beset farmers. Beyond doubt producers must combine to save themselves from the organised intermediaries who

stand between them and the consumers, but in the last year or two it has become painfully clear that national co-operation is not enough. Nearly every civilised Government, and some to whom the adjective partakes of the nature of a courtesy title, have been doing what they can for their nationals, but the world food supply is organised without regard to world demand and consequently the best laid schemes of harassed Governments "gang aft agley." It is at least reasonable to advance the suggestion that an effort should be made internationally to control production, in order to secure to the world a sufficiency and to guard against shortage on the one side and against glut on the other.

Careful study of a voluminous report just published on conditions during the year that ended in July last* shows that while all the Governments are alarmed, some are even taking action with their neighbours to regulate production and stabilise prices. Millions of pounds have been spent and lost in brief endeavour to arrest the downward progress of prices, but only a few representatives of the agricultural industry would appear to have any better scheme of improvement than higher production at lower cost. The best result of such methods is to lower prices while increasing supplies; it can only make confusion worse confounded. But State efforts, seconded as they are by the work of Unions and Associations, have a definite value in so far as they teach the futility of endeavour bounded by frontiers, and may tend to suggest or enforce the wisdom of treating the world's food production as a whole or at least as a number of inter-dependent parts.

Certain facts of the present situation may be briefly noted, the first and most important being that the fall in prices is not the outcome of monetary conditions; economic causes lie behind. Stabilisation based on financial rather than economic considerations and high tariffs that exaggerated the value of gold in relation to commodities would appear to provide the main causes of the world's troubles. Countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, Russia and the Argentine have long been a law to themselves, and the competition between them, which has been of the keenest, has involved all in such loss that three at least, Canada, Australia and the Argentine, are calling for concerted action. On the other hand, in Europe we find a small group of exporting countries, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Roumania and Jugoslavia, endeavouring to organise common action. The Conference of Warsaw (August, 1930) was a vigorous step in the right direction.

The extreme seriousness of the situation is revealed by reference to prices. Wheat has fallen more than 50 per cent. in five years without making the cost of bread appreciably cheaper. Rice, so far as Japan and Burma are concerned, has fallen 50 per cent. in the same period, sugar 50 per cent., coffee 65 per cent., tea and cocoa 50 per cent. or more, cotton and flax 50 per cent., silk 60 to 70 per cent. Meat, with the exception of pork, butter and cheese have kept up better, but wool has fallen between 50 and 60 per cent. The Inter-American Conference on Agriculture, Forestry and Animal Industry (Washington, September, 1930) passed a resolution that the problem of over-production of articles important as exports cannot be solved by the individual effort of a single country, even if it be the principal producer, but requires concerted international action. The International Preparatory Conference of the Second World Wheat Conference, held in Rome in the spring of 1931, considered this viewpoint, fifty countries being represented. The delegates would not appear to have been rich in vision. They proposed a publicity campaign for the encouragement of wheat eating and decided that nothing could be done to check the existing over-production. Better organisation of the market was the only measure that seemed practical. And the Conference called for more statistics, while expressing the pious hope that farmers would be able to obtain credits to tide them over hard times.

In May last there was a gathering in London, attended by representatives of the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, the U.S.S.R., Hungary, India, Poland, Rumania, Jugoslavia and Bulgaria. It dissolved in talk and empty aspirations. Apparently there was no real solution in the minds of the delegates other than that the world should eat up the surplus wheat. The gathering may be regarded as an unqualified failure.

In May, the Commission of Inquiry for European Union held its third session at Geneva. It took note of the fact that 40 per cent. of the employed folk of Europe are agriculturists and that if they received more money for their food stuffs they would have a larger spending power. It also noted that national methods for solving present difficulties were not meeting with any great success—indeed, that they had made a bad position worse. Growing more intelligent as it warmed to the work in hand, the Conference decided that "international action based on collaboration, with the definite intention of eliminating the obstacles to the free circulation of labour, capital and commodities, is alone capable of leading to a gradual solution of the present difficulties." Here we see at last that, after much painful striving and determined effort to save the liberty of unrestricted production, there was nothing left but to look the facts in the face. And the facts all point one way.

Credit, propaganda, and the multiplication of statistics have a part to play in the scheme of agricultural things, but they cannot affect the hard truth that over-production can only lead to accumulation of unsaleable surpluses at a price that will not cover the cost of production. The point that needs emphasis, and is persistently overlooked by gentlemen who attend Conferences and multiply words, is that these gluts and surpluses yield no benefit to the consumer. For example: a bag of coffee contains 60 kilograms. Last year, down to the end of August, under the "Defence of Coffee" scheme the Government of Brazil had destroyed 800,000 bags or nearly fifty million kilograms. The price of good coffee in Rome on the day of writing is ten shillings per kilo. In order to finance destruction in the country of origin a tax of ten shillings per bag is levied on every bag exported from Brazil.

In the same way the plight of wheat has not served the tables of the poor. With wheat round about 30 shillings or less on the London market, the price of the four-pound loaf should not reach sixpence, even allowing for the 45s. per quarter that the British farmer is to receive. The gluts from which the world suffers impoverish the producer, enrich the middleman, and leave the consumer a victim to every manner of overcharge. The control of production need bring no rise in prices so long as it is associated with the control of distribution. This point is constantly overlooked. Even *Land and Life*, an admirable commentary upon the situation in Great Britain, by Viscount Astor and Dr. Keith Murray (Gollancz), misses the significance of the work of the countless intermediaries who maintain food prices while farmers starve.

Looking around the world we find every country attempting to deal with a problem that must in the end be handled internationally. Argentina is arranging loans for its maize growers. Australia in labour has produced Wheat Pools. Brazil burns coffee and taxes every man who plants more bushes a dollar for each. Bulgaria has established an Office to purchase the home-grown grain. The Wheat Pools of Canada have involved seriously the credit of the Prairie Provinces. Czechoslovakia compels all her public institutions to buy home produce. All Denmark's wise management of her export trade has not saved her from a severe crisis. France maintains wheat at an artificial price and is limiting her wine production. Germany has a wheat quota and maintains the price of rye. Italy has instituted

* *The Agricultural Situation in 1930-31.* Rome. The International Institute of Agriculture. 25 lire.

a wheat campaign and a system of propaganda on a vast scale; the result is said to have been an increase of 20 per cent. in production for the years 1926–1930 over the years 1909–1913. The Italian miller must use 95 per cent. of home-grown wheat for the making of flour—presuming that so much is available, but the Italian Agricultural situation is by no means free from causes for anxiety. In Japan there are crises in the rice and silk industries, and the position is extremely serious. Holland, the Free Trade country in which living is so dear, is facing trouble and has imposed duties on sugar, guaranteed the sugar-beet growers, lent the potato-flour industry 4,500,000 florins, and put 10 per cent. of potato-flour into the nation's bread. Poland is living but not thriving behind a high tariff wall. Spain has forbidden the import of wheat and wheat-flour in order to keep up prices. Swedish bread, whether of wheat or rye, must be over 80 per cent. home grown. Switzerland is a bright spot on the agricultural map, and her state should be regarded carefully at home. She pays her farmers more than twice the price of imported flour, and as a result the foreign wheat is the cheapest, home growers command the highest price, and bread is cheaper than anywhere in Europe. The U.S.A. grain Stabilisation Company at the end of the year 1930–31 had 250 million bushels of wheat on its hands. It has sold wheat to Brazil for coffee (not without unexpected complications) and to the German Wheat Marketing Company for bonds. The attempts of the Federal Farm Board to control cotton growing have failed. Uruguay has been compelled to institute a State Wheat Monopoly.

While every State has been active its citizens have taken their own measures to deal with the troubles before them, but it cannot be said that success has been anywhere attained. We find in many parts of the world bursting granaries and starving people. Food production is the life work of the majority of the inhabitants of the world, and the present disorder of the markets, due to lack of an ordered system, is impoverishing the manufacturing interest in every country because the farmer, whether of wheat, cotton, maize, coffee or rice, is reduced to a condition of poverty and has lost his purchasing power.

The Agricultural Situation in 1930-31 advances no opinions; it is content to present the facts, but these facts can lead only to one conclusion. For food production the world should be treated as a single unit. S. L. B.

ESSENTIALS FIRST

(*A Dream of the Four Power Conference.*)

I dreamed this folly the other night—
Nine men were scaling an Alpine height,
All roped together like mountaineers.
I watched them climb, amidst doubts and fears,
Till, as they traversed a narrow ledge,
There were five who slipped on that razor edge
And hung o'er the yawning gulf below
(A drop of a thousand feet or so),
Half mad with fear of the death in store,
And slowly dragging the other four
To the fatal brink. Now you might have thought
That those other four would at once have sought
With a mighty heave to have hauled them back.
But no! they crouched on that narrow track,
Squabbling and arguing forth and back
As to what was the proper charge to make
For saving their friends for their own lives' sake,
And who should get it, and just what share
Of the strain of the rescue each should bear.
(While the five in agony swore and cursed
And fought as to which should be saved the first.)
At last they agreed to discuss a plan,
And a brand-new quarrel at once began.
For one said, "Tied in this fatal tether,
All nine should surely consult together;"
While another cried that the five should say,
If they wanted saving, which was the way
That would suit them best. So the strife went on
Till over the precipice all had gone.
And I thought when I woke, "What a foolish dream!
—Such a silly fancy it still must seem
To think that men, in their private stations
Should show no more sense than the greatest nations.

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

IRELAND AND THE OATH

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—There is a point in connection with the controversy raised by Mr. de Valera on the Oath of Allegiance which is not only one of considerable academic interest, but one which opens out a vista of quite alluring possibilities. It is a canon of statesmanship never to close and bolt the door on a policy which if not practicable to-day might well become desirably so within a relatively short space of time if the opportunity of making the necessary precedent be not neglected. For this reason I venture to believe that you will share my opinion that this point deserves public ventilation.

We Englishmen rightly regard the Oath not only as an integral part of the Treaty, but, which is still more important, a guarantee of loyal and wholehearted co-operation between Ireland and the other members of the British Commonwealth. In particular, it must never be forgotten that the Prime Ministers of the Dominions are admitted as members of the Committee of Imperial Defence, where the most confidential data are supplied and the most confidential matters discussed. Without an absolute mutual confidence between the parties represented, the whole Commonwealth edifice would become jeopardised. For this reason we would far prefer to see Ireland a completely independent State than a doubtful partner.

Now, I am convinced that it is the desire of the vast majority of the Irish people to remain a member of the British Commonwealth. I know Ireland well, and I count among my personal friends many members of Mr. de Valera's party—some of them belonging to the extremist camp. Even here, all of them appear to agree in this desire. What is it, therefore, that lies at the bottom of the difference between Mr. Cosgrave's Party and Mr. de Valera's as far as the Oath is concerned? I submit that it is this: Mr. Cosgrave's friends are prepared to acquiesce in the King of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who is also King of Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Newfoundland, remaining also King of the Irish Free State. Mr. de Valera's friends, on the other hand, desire to repudiate the Royal connection. They are Republicans. But they do not desire to repudiate the Commonwealth connection. I submit that if it were possible to eliminate from the Oath all reference to His Majesty and to redraft it and even strengthen it in a way which would make it perfectly clear that every member of the Dail pledged himself to maintain Ireland's loyal and wholehearted co-operation as a member of the British Commonwealth, there would be scarcely one, if any, who would not be prepared so to pledge himself. And this from the practical, as opposed to the sentimental, point of view, is what really matters.

I would like to insist on this point while proclaiming as an Englishman my undying loyalty to the Crown and to our monarchical Constitution. We have surely every right to insist on receiving a guarantee from Ireland and from every one of the Dominions, just as they might claim an equal right to receive a similar guarantee from us, that it is intended to work together as loyal partners of a single Commonwealth. Without such a guarantee given, or at least implied, there is no safe alternative but secession. But have we a right to impose on others, as a condition of partnership, loyalty to a particular institution dear to ourselves but obnoxious to some of them—especially if it is the case, as it seems to be with regard to Ireland, that an attempt to do so can only result in placing a fundamentally friendly people in the dilemma of having to choose between a perpetuated internal strife or acquiescence in secession?

If a compromise could be reached on these lines, not only do I believe that the breach between our country and the Irish Free State would be permanently healed, but I believe it would

open up new and wonderful possibilities for the gradual extension of our unique system of co-operation between free nations. Far from the Crown being the necessary link between the members of our system, it is actually an obstacle to its further and indefinite extension. It would, for example, be difficult to exaggerate the benefits which would come to the world, as well as to ourselves, if the way could be trod by which America might be tempted to enter our system. An Irish precedent on the lines indicated would make that dream a possibility. Another generation and we might see it realised. Nor would there be any reason to cut our dream short there. In this, in my humble opinion—for Rome was not built in a day—lies the only sure method of constructing a League of Nations on imperishable foundations, a League which in the fullness of time, gradually, might come to embrace the whole world. J. S. BARNES.

The Athenaeum Club.

GERMAN WAR-GUILT

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Dr. Harold Temperley, in your issue of April 2nd, asked me whether the League of Nations Union was prepared to publish the thesis that Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles did not charge the Germans with War-Guilt. The answer is in the affirmative; and I am glad to add that Dr. Temperley himself has consented to state and defend that thesis in the May number of the Union's journal, *Headway*.

But why, I wonder, does Dr. Temperley say that to cut out Article 231, as the Archbishop of York proposed in his Geneva sermon, would not only make it impossible to exact reparations in future but also "unjust to have done it in the past"? Impossible in future, no doubt, and perhaps in any case impracticable. But for myself I do not believe that what will be wrong or even imprudent to-morrow, and is so to-day, was necessarily so yesterday. MAXWELL GARNETT.

League of Nations Union.

THE ARISTOCRATIC EMBRACE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have read with much interest Mr. Garratt's pamphlet *The Mugwumps and the Labour Party*, as well as the comments of "Critic" in your last number. The mugwumps are certainly in a lamentable plight, but I would humbly suggest that they are likely to remain there till they realise that they are themselves greatly to blame for what has happened and in consequence mend both their manners and their morals. I have never been a very active politician (and expect to get nothing out of the Prime Minister), but for several years after the war I lived much among the mugwumps and carried away the conviction that, whatever faults Mr. MacDonald may have as a leader, an angel from heaven could have done nothing with such a Party. I never heard him given the benefit of a single doubt; every shortcoming was magnified: every disappointment gloated over with malicious enthusiasm: and all the world took up the proud position that they would trust their leader no farther than they could kick him. Yet if men would be generously led, they must first learn to follow generously. "That's what the King says, my boy, and what the King says is good enough for Sir Harry Lee," remarked the Cavalier as he pulled on his jackboots to join King Charles at Nottingham. "Three cheers for Mr. Gladstone, whatever 'e does," answered back across the centuries the mythical British workman in Hyde Park. These are two manifestations of the same chivalrous spirit which is the property of no class, but the privilege of *toute âme bien née*, and which was, as far as I could observe, completely lacking among Mr. MacDonald's supporters. Yet this loudly advertised contempt for their leader went with no self-denying ordinance. "The Carlton Club," wrote Lord Salisbury during a painful period of Cabinet-making, "resembles nothing so much as the Zoological Gardens at feeding time." The 1917 Club, during similar moments in the life of Mr. MacDonald, showed that, in this particular at any rate, it did not lag behind its predecessors. The Prime Minister told me that he had been compelled to stop going to the place altogether owing to the throng of place-hunters. From my personal observation I could entirely sympathise with him.

"Critic" suggests that the Prime Minister suddenly developed a contempt for his "horny-handed" supporters. This seems highly unlikely. Horny hands were not so common among Labour M.P.s and they formed the loyalest of his supporters: it is also strange that the Prime Minister is so unusual as to be repelled by the society of working men. It was the "inky hands" whose manners and disloyalty must have been intolerable of the men whom Barnave in an unlucky moment for himself called the "bluebottles of a parliament."

There is a great deal of humbug about all this. No one really suggests that the Prime Minister should have spent his leisure hob-nobbing with the proletariat in public houses: though, had he done so, he would have met with gentlemanly society and courteous treatment, as well as acquiring much useful information. For the average workman realises that after a hard day's work a man must be allowed to spend his leisure as he will. No, the objection is that Mr. MacDonald did not wish to spend his rare moments of peace being insulted by a lot of disloyal "bluebottles" or mugwumps. I presume that these social aristocrats of whom "Critic" speaks can, like the ordinary working men, instinctively treat Mr. MacDonald as one gentleman treats another, can realise that a Prime Minister is often overtaxed, headachy, and touchy, and that, unless he be treated with some courtesy and even deference, his life becomes intolerable. On the other side, the Prime Minister probably feels that he is not being intrigued against the very moment his back is turned.

I venture to think that until the "intellectuals" of the Labour Party adopt some of the methods of their opponents they will always lose their leaders and find themselves where they now are—in the cart.

Though it is a matter of no interest, I may add that I overcame my nausea to the extent of voting Labour at the last election. But it gave me no pleasure to leave a leader who had fought my battles for me during the war, when some of the men who are now most loudly denouncing him were enjoying fat political jobs.

70 Elm Park Road, Chelsea. FRANCIS BIRRELL.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—A word, if I may, in hearty support of the letter of "Middle Class." He is not by any means alone in his wish "that those of our Labour leaders to whom politics means something more than an opportunity of the social climb should join together and pledge themselves publicly to fight the numerous social practices and symbols which unquestionably mark the gulf between the few and the many."

Did not our leaders miss a great opportunity and neglect a duty to the Movement in failing to make a stand and set a new pace when first taking office eight years ago? These practices and symbols are the outgrowth and demonstration of a social crime, and it is the reverse of reassuring to find Labour political leaders apparently enjoying and rejoicing in what to the healthy minded should be an inner exasperation and an urge to outward revolt.

The fact that the East-Ender enjoys as a picture a pageant that he will hate and revolt against when he comes to understand its meaning is no good reason for a false attitude towards it by those who are looked upon as deliverers from an oppression that makes the pageant possible and grimly appropriate.

Of course, official people cannot avoid contact and association with old-timers in the demonstration of social cleavage, but it cannot be essential that they be markedly "diligent in earning a dress-shirt reputation."

By all means let us have a public and nonconforming "statement of faith on these points by a few dozen of our political leaders and a pledge against sharing," including also, one hopes, a protest against all super salaries—professedly made necessary by conformity with these practices and symbols. Such a pronouncement would stimulate needed thinking in an urgent direction; and when the new pace is set there will be a new and needed answer to the frequent jibe that all parties are alike when they get there! JESSE HAWKES.

Hemel Hempstead.

DIVORCE BY LEGAL FICTION

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—"F. C." and your readers may be interested to know that in Holland one spouse can issue a writ (not a petition) claiming divorce from the other for adultery. No one is in the least interested whether any adultery occurred or not so long as the charge is not denied; but before granting any decree the judge calls the parties together and asks whether they both still despair of reconciliation and really want a divorce. If they persist in

their desire there is no trouble and the process costs no more than £25. The House of Lords has done its best here; there is no obstacle but the House of Commons to the abolition of Canon Law fetters on common sense. E. S. P. HAYNES.

9 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.2.

THE PATENT MEDICINE SCANDAL

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Many years ago the British Medical Association published *Secret Remedies*, which recorded the results of their analysis of all the well-advertised secret remedies. No doubt, they hoped that the exposure would give the final blow to a fraudulent trade. On the contrary, it started a new and highly lucrative livelihood.

In hundreds of markets, all over the country, eloquent and loud-voiced men extol the merits of the leading nostrums, and then sell the stuff, which is compounded in accordance with the prescription in *Secret Remedies*, as guaranteed by the B.M.A.!

What was intended to kill the trade has brought handsome profits—though not to the proprietors of the secret remedy.

Lloyds Bank Chambers, H. H. STOCKDALE ROSS.
Horley, Surrey.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—It is not only that a Select Committee of the House of Commons has denounced these remedies and that two attempts have been made to introduce legislation on the subject. Years and years ago the *Lancet* or the *British Medical Journal* published an account of most of the specifics and showed by analysis how preposterous their claims were. But it is a forbidden subject in the press.

It has cost the *Countryman* several hundred pounds to decline from the beginning patent medicine, liquor, and money-lending advertising—all of which is accepted by some of its most respectable contemporaries—but I am sure that we have done right, even from a business point of view, for, with our current issue, we have no fewer than 136 pages of other advertising.

Countryman Office, Idbury, J. W. ROBERTSON SCOTT.
Kingham, Oxfordshire.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I believe that the opinion of at least 90 per cent. of all advertisers and newspaper proprietors will be with Dr. Harry Roberts in his condemnation of advertisements "the purpose of which is the defrauding of the public." But Dr. Roberts is quite wrong in suggesting that "nothing whatever has been done" to protect the public in this matter and to check the activities of the fraudulent advertiser. Something has been done, not, indeed, by Parliament, nor by the medical profession, but by the representatives of the advertising industry themselves, including the newspapers which come under Dr. Roberts' castigation, and a careful comparison of the popular press of to-day and that of twenty years ago clearly shows the results.

The Advertising Association, which is a body representative of all the interests comprised in advertising, including nearly all the newspapers and magazines in the country, maintains an Investigation Department, the business of which it is to detect and prevent fraudulent and improper advertising of every kind. This department, I understand, some years ago reached conclusions in some respects identical with those of the Parliamentary Committee to which Dr. Roberts refers. What is more to the point, its conclusions were at once translated into action, with the result that, for some years past, the columns of the press have been definitely closed to the quack who wishes to advertise a "cure" for consumption, cancer, epilepsy, diabetes or rupture, and generally to the worst forms of patent medicine advertising.

This Association has, of course, no compulsory powers, and it would be foolish to pretend that no advertisement of the prohibited classes ever finds its way into the press. But I believe that on the whole the newspapers have accepted this voluntary censorship which, I happen to know, has been immensely effective in checking the worst abuses of advertising. In the eighteen years since Parliament considered the matter and during which so many people have talked of the abuses of advertising, the representative body of the advertising industry itself alone has acted. If it has not entirely purged the columns of the press, it has at least done much to protect the public. An uninformed reader of Dr. Roberts' article might easily conclude that the organised forces of the newspaper and advertising industries were arrayed in defence of the abuses of patent medicine advertising. It is with the hope of removing any such erroneous impression that I venture to ask you to publish this letter.

Inner Temple. ADVOCATUS DIABOLI.

SUGAR BEET

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Usher states in your issue of April 2nd that the country has spent £27,295,000 in subsidy and preference in order to produce 1,318,052 tons of sugar, which could have been bought in world markets for £8,000,000. As a matter of fact, the market price of raw sugar to-day is 4s. 6d. per cwt., and on this basis the value of the above-mentioned quantity is approximately only £6,000,000, which makes the position even *more* outrageous than Mr. Usher states.

In considering this issue it should be remembered that no State money is being used in an attempt to reduce our imports of such things as barley, oats, pig products, milk, poultry, butter, cheese, eggs and potatoes, for which our annual import bill amounts to approximately £150,000,000! What *is* the particular magic in sugar that makes it worth while giving its production in this country such wholly disproportionate support, especially when the Empire is full of sugar-producing areas, where sugar can be produced two or three times more cheaply than in this country?

TAXPAYER.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLMASTER

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As a fairly consistent reader of your paper I trust you will permit me to file a brief protest against what appears to be an attempt—either conscious or unconscious—to pillory, by reference to what is still frequently termed The New Psychology, the normal, healthy young man who decides to become a public schoolmaster. In your last issue Mr. Herbert refers to the questioning eye cast upon the man who "prefers to return to school life rather than to face the world of ordinary men and women." The implication appears to me to be totally unjustified.

Ex-army men of the war generation will probably confirm what is not merely my own isolated impression: that the schoolmaster was particularly effective in front line service: he passed with honours a test of character that was perhaps elementary but must be admitted to have been an exacting one. There is no reason to suppose he is a different man to-day from what he was then.

The "unconscious urge" and "complex" method of getting at people whose ideas or interests may happen to be unsympathetic to, or different from, our own is clearly one which is capable of varied application. One psychologist has told us that ". . . behind and beyond the peaks of consciousness lies—not, as we have supposed, the valley of utter oblivion—but the deep unslumbering sea of the unforgettable past." Most of us can consciously recollect some occasional wounds to our *amour-propre* received when at school, as when in the Army, from those in authority. Is it not possible that much literary criticism of the schoolmaster, although representing a far higher standard in the matter of technique, is in reality unconsciously expressive of the same kind of feelings as those which moved the writers of the verses in the one-time popular songs, "I've Found My Sergeant Major" and "I've Got My Captain Working for Me Now"? J. DADD.

52 Whitwell Road, Southsea.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—When the public school problem from the boy and parent angle is receiving a good deal of much-needed attention, it is refreshing to have some consideration given to the master. But there are some generalisations in Mr. Herbert's article which are not widely applicable.

First, salaries, "The work is not ill-paid." But there is a very large class, perhaps a majority, of public schools which pay only the notoriously inadequate Burnham Scale (£234, less 10 per cent. cut, rising £15 a year). My own school pays £285 plus £15 pension allowance—but it costs £190 p.a. at least to maintain a boy there. The Burnham Scale, however, has a very serious drawback; theoretically, a master after 10 years' experience is entitled to a salary £150 above the commencing figure; actually the chances are that if he then applies for a new post he will be turned down in favour of a young man fresh

from his university. Stagnation is thus the penalty attached to adequate pay.

There may be sometimes a justification for respecting a schoolmaster's motive in the choice of a career; yet nowadays the commonest factor is probably neither vocational uplift nor latent homosexualism, but the fact that this profession is superficially less deadening than anything the industrial system can offer.

But Mr. Herbert is to be applauded for exposing the failings of a system whose deification of inertia keeps a man half baked for the rest of his days, and which encourages perversion in masters by discouraging, and sometimes forbidding, acquaintance with the opposite sex. The excellent people who deplore the evil effects of monasticism on boys might extend their sympathy to the schoolmaster.

CELIBATE NOT BY CHOICE.

OTHELLO

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Desmond MacCarthy in his criticism of Mr. Ernest Milton's Othello at the St. James's Theatre says: "The innovation in the bedroom scene of discovering Othello gazing out of the window did not strike me as a happy one. All the great Othellos, from Salvini downwards, have made much of Othello's entry."

Othello's position at the window as mentioned is clearly connected with the opening words of the scene—

> It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul!
> Let me not name it to you, ye chaste stars, etc.

Henry Morley, in his admirable *Journal of a London Playgoer* (1866), writing about Fechter's Othello in 1861, describes in detail the setting for the bedchamber scene and, after quoting the words above, goes on to say:

> When Mr. Fechter spoke these lines holding a handglass like a hairbrush that he had deliberately gone to fetch from Desdemona's bed, and which he threw, after speaking a few lines in dudgeon, to the carpenter, I had not imagination strong enough to conceive what he meant. . . . Now Mr. Fechter's explanatory book shows me that here Othello looks at his face in the glass, and is telling his soul that his skin is the cause of his misfortunes! It is his skin that he will not name to the chaste stars!

5 Iden Street, Liverpool. JAMES NOONAN.

CO-OPERATIVES AND RUSSIAN TOURS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have received quite a number of requests from readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION for information of tours to the U.S.S.R.

I am pleased to be able to say that Centrosoyus (the All Russian Union of Consumers Societies) has again issued through the Education Department of the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society an invitation to British Co-operators to visit the Soviet Union during July. It is stipulated, however, that only those who are actually members of Co-operative Societies and interested in studying the achievements of Consumers' Co-operation, particularly in the fulfilment of the Five Year Plan, are included in this invitation.

Those who want details of the tours arranged are advised to write to Joseph Reeves, Education Secretary, Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, Ltd., Co-operative Institute, Parson's Hill, Woolwich, S.E.18. JOS. REEVES.

Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, Ltd.,
Co-operative Institute,
Parsons Hill, Woolwich, S.E.18.

Miscellany

BRAVE NEW MUSIC

NO one has attempted to describe utopian music for a utopia. Perhaps in all utopias music would be superfluous; or everybody would make it for himself at will, as and when wanted, and in a utopia it could only be wanted in pure pleasure of exercising one's musical faculty—if one still possessed such a thing. In the *Brave New World* described by Mr. Aldous Huxley, music, however, exists only as part of the sociological scheme with a definite purpose. In fact it is one of the three great pneumatic blisses, the other two being sex and perfume.

As a pneumatic bliss it is like the drug *soma*, a standardised product producing definite results. There is no critical attitude to what is heard; one knows what one is going to hear and what the effect of hearing it will be, and takes it solely for that purpose. In a lesser degree this is perhaps true of music in human society as we know it. One might generalise and say that most people go to hear music for pleasure, but admitting that the pleasure might be of widely different kinds. The various attempts to classify people who are sensitive to music—*mélomanes*, as the French call them—into different types is useful and true enough if one remembers that no living human being fits exactly into any one of these types, but all are more or less mixed and individual. It is a virtue of Mr. Huxley's utopia that he has not ignored the fact that a standardised utopia can only exist for a standardised human being who did not grow or change. It is only thus that any standardised utopian music could even be possible.

The most common type of music lover is, I suspect, the person on whom music, any music, has a direct hypnotic effect which is stimulating to reverie. Nearly all musical people can listen to music in this way with a relaxed consciousness through which drift images, memories and vague sensations. Many writers and thinkers have thus found music a most useful relaxation and gentle stimulant without having had much understanding of it, and it is the only way in which large numbers of so-called musical people listen to music. In this sense music has the indefinite and almost infinite power of perfume to awaken associations; and drawing analogies between music and perfume was a favourite practice of a well-known American writer on music, James Huneker, who, I imagine, is not much read nowadays. There is something especially tactile or sensuous in this attitude to music that suited Victorian romanticism, and of all composers Chopin has been the most subject to enjoyment of this kind. On the other hand there are numbers of music lovers to whom this attitude to music is hateful; some of them pride themselves on having a purely intellectual attitude to music, and when they enjoy a piece of music it is because they understand it just as if reading a piece of clear well-reasoned and lucid prose whose meaning they perceive and agree with. There is always pleasure to be got from exercising a faculty, and those who seek intellectually to understand the music they hear will naturally get their appetite whetted by difficulties and complexities; and as this taste develops so they develop a preference for following an abstruse musical argument such as they imagine they hear in a good fugue by Bach.

The third common type of music lover is one who wishes to be excited by music. He goes to music as he would to a good drama expecting to be thrilled. The chief masters of these music lovers are, naturally, Wagner and the great romantic classics. Of course, there are thrills and thrills, and in an ordinary human being who is not a standardised member of a utopia there is an ever-present though sometimes dormant criticism of the thrills he is experiencing. If this were not so, no development, no change in musical taste or judgment would ever be possible; we should all of us just gyrate on our fixed axes and have the one reaction and no other to the music we heard; in fact, we should only be able to hear one kind of music. As it is, nobody, perhaps, is ever quite fixed in this condition; everybody changes and develops, although it would be difficult if not impossible to state the principles of this development. These main categories of music lovers contain innumerable sub-divisions, and it is chiefly owing to an emphasis, never perhaps wholly permanent and unchangeable, upon certain aspects of music which is chiefly responsible for the great and acute differences in opinion among music lovers about music and musical performances. Take those, for example, who have a marked predilection for beauty of tone or surface beauty. Such a person might be so prejudiced for or against a singer or violinist by virtue of his possessing or not this beauty of tone as to be almost deaf to his other musical qualities.

And so far away is the approach of some people to music that even a romantic or appealing personality is the main factor determining their pleasure in hearing a musician play or sing.

Apart from the musical development of the individual which influences his taste and judgment there is a social development. Since the end of the last century there has been a great reaction against romanticism, sentimentalism and surface beauty in music. I suppose we may consider that the same thing has happened in all the other arts too. But what is turned out by one door is apt to return by another, and he would be a daring critic who ventured to declare that there was no sentimentalism or romanticism in the brave new music of the world since the war. In this respect Schönberg, for example, seems to me, even in his later phase, no different from Wagner, or Stravinsky from Tchaikovsky. But all artists seem much more self-conscious to-day than formerly. The tendency of society is undoubtedly towards becoming more aware of itself and its demands and pleasures and to know more clearly what it is doing. This makes for masquerading of personality in the case of many sensitive artists who are afraid of merely revealing their own weakness and limitations in their work, and so they tend to deny themselves in advance as it were. The most fruitful and enduring work is, however, likely always to be done by those musicians who are not afraid of their own inevitable limitations, whilst naturally their status and value will depend on the nature and degree of these limitations. For instance, to most critical musicians to-day, Verdi, for example, seems so much richer and more creative than he did to musicians fifty years ago because what appeared to them as limitations are seen by us to be virtues because they belong to his musical nature which was vital, genuine and extremely gifted. We are constantly being re-surprised by Verdi's music and are always finding something new and enjoyable in it which to us has no more date than spring or summer and belongs no more to a social period than rain or frost.

I would not be surprised if a similar thing happens to a contemporary composer who is now distinctly under a cloud, Richard Strauss. I do not make any comparison of the two musicians except to say that Richard Strauss, in my opinion, also has that creative musical genius which endures after what has made it fashionable and then unfashionable has faded out of it. There is such a definite quality as musicality that is quite independent of movements and fashions. The musicians who persist from one epoch to another are those who possess this musicality to a sufficiently high degree, and Richard Strauss seems to me to possess this musicality in sufficient force to outlive many more intellectually intriguing and interesting composers. It is fortunate that we cannot define precisely what this "musicality" is; it is something quintessential and in every genuine instance unique; nor do we know what it is until it comes to surprise us, and that is why there can be no Brave New World of Music or Musical Utopia to frighten us by its appalling perfection. W. J. TURNER.

ENGLISH AND CONTEMPORARY

MR. MATTHEW SMITH clinched his reputation some years ago as a painter of marked individuality. His bold colour, impetuous design, and a grandeur of manner in its execution made his work stand out brilliantly amid the dimmer manifestations of a London Group which had lost the vigour of its early impulse. A one-man exhibition demonstrated that it shone not only by contrast, but by itself. Here was a painter who had continued his way with a remarkable consciousness and singleness of purpose, and who had attained complete mastery of his expression. But pleasure, in its desire for increase, is ungrateful to that it feeds upon. Mr. Smith's accomplishment was altogether satisfying as far as it went, yet one could not help doubting whether it would go any farther. Was there not a fear, for instance, that the reds which he handled so well might rob him of his colour-freedom, and that the very control which he exercised over his medium might lead always to the same results, delightful in themselves yet on the whole monotonous?

Thus the exhibition at Messrs. Tooth's was to be expected with anxiety as well as excitement. Mr. Smith has triumphantly swept away the possible apprehension, and his one-man show is very much more than a one-picture show as well. For he has gone far beyond his previous achievement. The old qualities are there, but they have grown in strength and enormously in variety. The reds are still unabashed and resplendent, but they are not tyrants. Blues, greys, and other colours in all the joy and complication of their statement claim their share of Mr. Smith's palette. In such single-figure pictures as *Siesta* and *Femme Endormie*, or the flower-pieces *Anemones and Marguerites* and *Pale Pink Roses*, there is a variety in the proportioning of hues which prove Mr. Smith, instead of being limited, possessed of infinite resources. We know now that his next exhibition will be exciting too, but there will be no question of anxiety. He has helped to inject new life into contemporary English painting, and has shown that it can be joyful and intellectual at the same time.

Mr. Christopher Wood, a memorial exhibition of whose most recent paintings is being held at the Lefevre Galleries, had taken a leading place among our painters of the younger generation. His death, for all its lamentable destruction of the highest promise, did not occur before he had asserted the measure of his gifts. Successive presentations of his work were so much successive progress. Early in his career he seized the elements of a certain Parisian *chic*, and might have exploited it with a very considerable ability. Instead, he set out upon the nobler and more adventurous discovery of himself. With his latest work he found what he wanted to say in his art and his own way of saying it.

He had weighed contemporary movements and gained from them a certain degree of technical enrichment, but there is no hint of pastiche in the present exhibition. A movement is useful enough to a quick, prehensile talent lacking in originality, but for a real creator it is little more than a prison. Wood realised the ultimate sterility not only of imitation, but of an art revolving upon itself in experiments detached from the rhythm of existence. Choosing the representation of natural appearances rather than the solution of mere problems in painting, he projected his skill upon life and set out in search of his own subject-matter, finding it in the end on the coasts of Cornwall and Britanny.

The pictures at the Lefevre Galleries are of Breton villages, fishing-folk and peasants. Some of them, being paintings of street-vistas in which grey predominates, are superficially reminiscent of Utrillo. They are worthy, indeed, to stand beside Utrillo's better work, and are superior to that painter's more forced and artificial production. But there is a personality and genuineness in Wood which keeps him independent of comparisons. The pictures stand on their own merit, with their enchanting echo of a romantic predilection and their sympathy with the hard, brave life and the wonder of the sea. *Woman at Prayer*, *Dancing Sailors*, *Boat-Building*, and *Church and Market* have the real tang of Brittany about them and are exquisite pieces of painting. Like all good painting, they are at once original and in the line of tradition.

At the Leicester Galleries, Mr. Nevinson shows what he aptly describes as "water-colours from Nature." For the most part they are straightforward landscapes of the South of France, realistic and exact, giving full value to blue sky and sea, white buildings and sunny weather. We share the delight of the painter's holiday, but miss the implica-

tions of his more important work. His own particular gift for conveying the spirit of a city is to be found, however, in the renderings of a tragic, time-worn Venice. There are also vivid notes of London, Paris and New York, while *From Petworth Park* and *Snow in Derbyshire* ring beautifully true in their sense of the English scene.

This real sense of rural England has been grasped also by Mr. Cedric Morris with his admirable exhibition at the same galleries. His work has increased in power of construction, and an occasional woolliness of *matière* has now disappeared. But the old magic is still there, the astonishing instinct for catching the quality of a region, building it into convincing form and setting it aglow with light and colour. Alike with a grey, bleak Cornwall, a russet Landes, an iridescent North Africa, or a warm, intimate Suffolk, Mr. Morris wields his especial enchantment. The same sensibility and genuineness place him, with Mr. John and Mr. Matthew Smith, among the few who can paint flowers as if they really were flowers and not "arrangements." And in the white cascade of *Cherry Trees* and the jewelled curtain of *Hedgerow in March*, Mr. Morris allies such insight with his skill as to make him at once a companion, despite the difference of medium, to the greater English nature-poets.

These exhibitions should put the most hardened gallery-goers in good humour. With Mr. Sickert at the Beaux Arts they are not only safe from anti-climax, but will have the cup of their enjoyment brimmed. For here is a painter with universal comprehension who gathers space, time and all the scale of the emotions to his canvas, and in this particular show is displayed in the happiest variety of his genius. Here is a more living royal portrait, *Conversation Piece at Aintree*, than ever graced the Academy, and, as a contrast to pomp, the circumstantial *Area Belle*. And with these are more of Mr. Sickert's metamorphoses of Victorian illustrations into masterpieces of wit and colour, as in *Woman's Sphere* and *Le Tapis Vert*, after Sir John Gilbert. Yet from the same hand comes the impressive, finely dignified *Study for the Head of Christ* and the massive intricacy of the two pictures of the Porte de Saint-Denis, as well as the frisky *Rural Dean* and the pensive *Carolina Dell'Acqua*. Nothing of the human seems alien to Mr. Sickert, whose unremitting curiosity with regard both to life and to his art makes the later work every whit as fresh and invigorating as the earlier. At such a show one can but admire and be grateful, and take one more peep at the *Area Belle*. It is a long time since there has been such a month at the galleries, and since English painting has made so brave a display.

T. W. EARP.

MIRACLES NEVER CEASE; OR DOMMAGE À DIAGHILEV

IT is as the derisive and gangsterish funeral service of the Russian Ballet, not an inspired blast of propaganda, that I view this remorseless production, the Lyceum *Miracle*, since, when we are not starting at processions of what seem gleaming *débutantes* disguised as nuns, supporting electric fixtures, and intoning they know not what, the stage is chiefly occupied with a series of *ballets*. These are imposed upon the story of a Nun (Miss Losch) who falls in love with a Knight on the day she is received. The Spielmann (M. Massine) induces them to fly together, her place being taken by the Madonna (Lady Diana Cooper) who descends from her niche in the cathedral. The misfortunes of the Nun among various fairy-story grandees, all "mental," form the second act, in scenes during the seventh of which she returns to the cathedral, and the Madonna returns to her niche, a feat which is acclaimed by the nuns with screams of a blood-curdling unsuitability.

The chief pretentions of the production, naturally, are to be found in the scenery, costumes and choreography. Half the auditorium has been transformed into Hollywood Perpendicular, while the cathedral on the stage is more a triumph, possibly, of the parrot, than the Paramount, mind. It is far more stone than stone, in both cases. The Forest scene, opening the second act, is conceived with that nice admixture of the natural and formal most detrimental to both, and succeeds in resembling an effeminate vegetable garden. The scenery in the grandees' castles contrives to dispel the essential gravity of Gothic while denying all its joy and exaltation; relying on a multiplicity of colours and stuffs to hide an absence of the ideas they purport to clothe.

As regards the dresses, there are two pages and some negroes in the coronation scene whose clothes are as beautiful as their *provenance* is suspect. For the rest I would like to remind Herr Reinhardt and Mr. Cochran that, if they find Picasso or Chirico too highbrow, there are designers in this country who, although they might not be able to compete with Mr. Oliver Messel on his own ground, might be accorded preference when there is apparent need for serious and original work. We can all remember Bakst for ourselves. The choreography is, with the exception of one dance, disgraceful.

It will be only fair, however, to conclude by mentioning that this crazy assault upon Christian mythology has its moments of respite. One of these is during Miss Losch's excellent dance at the end of the first act, and the others are due to Lady Diana Cooper.

BRIAN HOWARD.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Don Giovanni" with the Right Ending

WHAT should we do without the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells? In the last fortnight they have given us performances of Shakespeare's *Othello* and of *Don Giovanni* incomparably better than any we would be likely to see in the West End. And they are better for this, if no other, reason: that the first object of these productions is to give the public an intelligible performance of Shakespeare and of Mozart, which keeps as near as possible to the text and score of the originals. At Sadler's Wells last week *Don Giovanni* was performed with the ending written for it by Mozart and Da Ponte, and not in the inferior truncated form adopted by every other opera company, English or foreign, that has a season in London. After Don Giovanni's descent to hell, the other characters return to the stage bent on vengeance, Leporello gives a comic account of his master's disappearance, and in a spirited sextet the moral of the story is plainly put. The innovation of giving Mozart's opera as it was written was begun with the first performance of *Don Giovanni* at the Old Vic, in November, 1921. The English translation, written by Mr. Edward J. Dent for that occasion, and used, so far as I know, at the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells alone, is by far the best translation we have; it is genuinely witty and colloquial, and fits the music. At Sadler's Wells on Friday I was particularly grateful for the continuity of the performance (by means of a drop-curtain for small scenes), with only one break in the middle—after Don Giovanni's pursuers have closed round him and unmasked at the ball. I have heard many better sung performances of *Don Giovanni* which gave me less pleasure. The orchestra was at times thin and not completely distinct, but the performance went with a swing, and the whole cast sang and acted well. The performance will be repeated at Sadler's Wells on April 30th at 2.30.

"Electra"

Euripides, of the three Greek tragedians, is perhaps the most sympathetic to our present stage conventions,

if not to our thought. Accordingly, I was sorry to see the Representative English Players, who are presenting *Electra* for a series of matinees at the Rudolf Steiner Hall, assuming so willingly that Euripides has nothing whatever to do with the modern theatre or modern life. I say nothing against the buskin-and-mask convention, which has to-day at least a curiosity value. But lacking as we do a modern "grand manner," it is hopeless to expect much of the grand manner of thirty years ago. There were moments, inevitably, when Miss Esmé Beringer achieved dramatic force and splendour as Electra—it is, after all, a superb acting part. But the moments were oases, seen from afar across dreary wastes of rhetoric, in which metaphor and simile dimmed rather than illuminated the passions she was presenting. Mr. Terence de Marney was less recitational, but physically he could not compass the majestic, stricken Orestes. The chorus failed to avoid a note of pious unction, most inappropriate to its context, but excellent small performances were given by Mr. George Skillan, as the Messenger, and Mr. A. S. Homewood, as the Old Man.

The Stage Irishman

The best efforts—and how noisy they are—of Mr. Patrick Kearney and Mr. Wagstaff Gribble cannot make *Old Man Murphy* a good play. Rarely can a worse play have made a better entertainment than this farce at the Savoy. For Mr. Arthur Sinclair is Murphy come to visit his son Charles Murfree who is standing for mayor in a Western American town. Nothing matters except that Mr. Sinclair and his bowler hat and his twinkling legs and his rich, insinuating, deceitful voice should be about his business. Miss Maire O'Neill gallantly subordinates herself, and gives an amusing performance as the Widow Donovan whom cruel circumstance and relatives always prevent from boiling over. The whole company acts well, and no one who cares for lively acting should miss the play.

And They Expected to Live Happily Ever After

Jean Jacques (Maurice Evans) falls in love at first sight with Nicole (Ann Todd), a gracious Venetian vision who has got stuck in the lift. He goes uninvited to the masked ball, and finds a mocking and callous goddess, Simone (Jeanne de Casalis), in Nicole's frock. However, the adored one is truly adorable, her elderly husband (Milton Rosmer) an amenable philosopher, and the affair is about to arrange itself when the curtain drops. The scenery and costumes are attractive, the play is witty, the actors charming, and I almost enjoyed myself. But French chocolate soufflé has been translated into English sponge cake plus jam plus custard trifle, and the philosophy of tolerance is placed, like a glacé cherry, in the centre of this piece of culinary neatness. A lighter hand and less tidy mind would have made *The Heart Line*, at the Lyric, really amusing.

The Circus Moves On

Even the most experienced showmen occasionally forget that conversation does not make a play. They have the excuse that the public is often satisfied with a combination of backchat and personality. But the talk which killed *Caravan* (Queen's Theatre) was too silly, aimless and prolonged for the most patient to endure. A little less moralising might have saved the situation, for the clown-loving thousands created by Dame Laura Knight and Lady Eleanor Smith were pathetically anxious to have their peep behind the scenes. However, Mr. Cedric Hardwicke's maunderings about the stars and, worse still, Mr. O. B. Clarence's thoughts on the disadvantages of being alive, were too much for the most devout worshipper at the vagabond's shrine. The theme of the play was hard to discover. It was intended to be the conflict between the call of the roving life and the womanly desire to settle down, as it presented itself to Katie, the circus proprietor's daughter. Unfortunately, there was no real problem. Katie was a poor acrobat and obviously a most unsatisfactory wife. No wonder she could not make up her mind for four acts and then did not decide to stay with the troupe until she had given her father heart failure by telling him she meant to go! Instead of one climax, there were four, each cancelling the last one out with exasperating irrelevance. Mr. Cedric Hardwicke, as the circus proprietor, extracted the last ounce of sentimentality from the part. His material was too much for him. The beautiful and sensitive acting of Miss Eileen Beldon as the daughter, on the other hand, would have carried a slightly less vapid play. Alas! neither her wayward charms nor the flatly exuberant laughter of Miss Maisie Gay were of much avail.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Friday, April 15th—
"Vile Bodies," Vaudeville.

Sunday, April 17th—
C. E. M. Joad on "Confusions of Modern Science," Conway Hall, 11.
Rachmaninoff, Royal Albert Hall, 3.
D'Alvarez, Song Recital, The Palladium, 3.15.
"Sunday Nine O'clocks," Faculty of Arts Theatre.

Monday, April 18th—
"Hamlet," Old Vic.
"Madame Pepita," Embassy.
"The Hundred Days," New.
Dr. Raymond Unwin on "The Town Planning of Kensington," Kensington Town Hall, 8.15.
Dr. Arthur Compton-Rickett on D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce, Gresham College, 6.15.

Tuesday, April 19th.
Geoffrey Wilson on "The Universities and World Peace," Friends House, 1.20.
"Faces," Comedy.

Wednesday, April 20th.
B.B.C. Symphony Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
The Arts Theatre Club's Fifth Birthday Celebration.
Dr. L. Segal on "The Constitution of U.S.S.R.," Conway Hall, 8.

Thursday, April 21st—
Delius's "The Mass of Life," Royal Albert Hall, 8.15.
J. L. Hammond on "The Rise of Great Britain," B.B.C., 7.30.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

AS I read and reread the stories in Mr. Kipling's *Limits and Renewals* (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.), I was haunted by two lines of one of his intercalated poems :

> For the past he buried brings
> Back unburiable things.

Mr. Kipling will not bury his past ; but if he tried, as his enemies do, how much of it would defiantly remain unburiable, and how his enemies hate that vehement, incessant, untiring vitality of his. Certain aspects of it tire most of his admirers ; but they accept or ignore his boyish enthusiasm for the secret society, the regiment, the communism of the old school tie, for the sake of his vigour, his queer mysticism, his intense curiosity, his profound pity, and his understanding of those worlds in which the mind of man is possessed by dark uncertainties, when the will fails, and the doors of the unconscious are open and the sufferer loses not only control but the belief that control is possible. Of the fourteen stories in this book five introduce different cases of nervous breakdown, and portray it with a positive, descriptive power that can only be properly appreciated by those who have read any medical books on the subject, attempting a similar task. It is true that here Mr. Kipling takes the easiest varieties of neurasthenia as it appears in simple, rather objectively minded people. But how convincingly does he betray their miseries, and their consolations ! I believe completely that John Marden, of *The Woman in his Life*, was cured by his Aberdeen bitch and her need for him ; and we have no right to complain that Mr. Kipling, as a rule, prefers to write about men and women who " do things " rather than about men and women who think and dream ; more particularly as no one has paid higher tribute to the dreamer than he. His skill in giving shape and force to his sufferers' dread only displays itself to one who reads the whole of a story. Mr. Kipling has always been a master of the culminating effect, of the rendering of atmosphere by suggestions which suddenly pass into statement, by a cunning variation of little concrete touches and bold, generalised ideas. In the tales of the business man, whose past drags into his present, of the doctor who is haunted by his operating work in the trenches, he shows all his old skill :

> He said not a word of the horror, the blackness, the loss of the memory of things, the collapses at the end, the recovery and retraversing of the circle of that night's Inferno. . . .
>
> . . . It was succeeded a few days later by a small dog, pressed against the skirting-board of his room—an inky, fat horror with a pink tongue, crouched in the attitude of a little beast he had often watched at Mr. Wilham's fashionable West End pet-shop, where dogs lived in excelsior-floored cubicles, appealing to the passers-by. It began as a spreading blurr, which morning after morning became more definite.
>
> . . . He went on and on about his Voices, and I cross-examined. He said they used to begin with noises in his head like rotten walnuts smashing. . . .

* * *

I wonder whether this book will persuade those who are persistently occupied with the craft of prose narrative to examine Mr. Kipling with a mind determinedly detached from any prejudices about this great craftsman's subjects or opinions. I am inclined sometimes to think that the main difference between Mr. Kipling's technique and much modern experimental stuff is that Mr. Kipling never forgets the lubricating oil. A great deal of the excitement caused by modern experimental prose—some good examples may be found in the first number of Mr. Eugene Jolas' revived *transition*—is caused by the noise made by heated bearings, grit in sensitive parts, and the general choke, throb and stutter that come when a man has not the skill needed to keep his machinery running perfectly. There are stories in this book which are as masterly as any Mr. Kipling has written before ; that is, as masterly as anything that has ever been done in prose narrative—for though a critic may prefer, if he will, the craft of George Moore, or Henry James, or Turgenev, or Tchekov, or Mr. Beerbohm, or Mrs. Woolf, he cannot say that any of these so different authors excel Mr. Kipling in technique. It seems to me impossible to deny that Mr. Kipling, at his best, can do exactly what he wishes to do with a certainty, a respect for his material and a precise knowledge of his and its limitations that cannot be excelled. Several stories here show that power of his at its highest ; there are none which are without his exact placing, his brilliant savings of impossible positions, his exquisite strokes that come from a living knowledge of the ground he is playing in. The three best stories are " Dayspring Mishandled," " Fairy-Kist," " The Manner of Men " : very near these are the two definitely medical tales, " Unprofessional " and " The Tender Achilles," while " The Miracle of Saint Jubanus " has the gay affection, the lovely tenderness that overcome Mr. Kipling when he writes about France. Here is his description of the background for his story.

> He stood at the church door and looked down into the village beneath, half buried among the candles of the horse-chestnuts. It climbed up, house by house, from a busy river, to sharp, turfed slopes that lapped against live rock, whence, dominating the red valley, rose enormous ruins of an old château with bastions, curtains, and keeps, and a flying bridge that spanned the dry moat. Valerian and lilac in flower sprang wherever there was foothold.

* * *

" The Manner of Men " is the story of St. Paul's shipwreck told by two of the ship's officers. It is a masterpiece of reconstruction, in which Mr. Kipling succeeds beyond any possible expectation in showing us Paul as he might have seemed on that voyage. It is done by a series of the most delicate touches, in the words of the ship's officers. " Oh, a little shrimp of a man, but—but he seemed to take it for granted that he led everywhere. He messed with us. . . ." " He asked me for the keys of the leg-bars to make them easier. ' *I*'ve been through this sort of thing before,' he said, ' but they are new to it down below. Give me the keys.' I told him that there was no order for him to have the keys ; and I recommended him to line his hold for a week in advance, because we were in the hands of the Gods. ' And when are we ever out of them ? ' he asked. He looked at me like an old gull keeping just astern of one's taffrail in a full gale. . . ." " Paul said to me : ' Serve Caesar. You are not canvas I can cut to advantage at present. But if you serve Caesar you will be obeying at least some sort of law.' He talked as though I were a barbarian. Weak as I was, I could have snapped his back with my bare hands. I told him so. ' I don't doubt it,' he said. ' But that is neither here nor there. If you take refuge under Caesar at sea, you may have time to think. Then I may meet you again, and we can go on with our talks. But that is as The God wills.' " There is one story of the other world, a pendant to *On the Gate*, but not equal to that fine work either for clearness or for imagery. Of the poems here, everyone has complained that they are not poetry ; and certainly none is equal to Mr. Kipling's own best. It were more generous however to notice how many lines or phrases in them are memorable as only poetry is memorable. " Ah ! would swift ships had never been about the seas to rove ! " . . . " The broken, honey-hued, honey-combed limestone Cream under white-hot sun." It is the imagination of a poet that impels Mr. Kipling now as always, even if it be the mischievous ingenuity of a school-boy that makes him sometimes twist his imagination ; and if to-day he arouses annoyance in some it is because his vitality, exercised always with things other than himself, seems a judgment on a dry, analytical age in which intelligence is feeding despondently upon itself.

RICHARD SUNNE.

MAXIM GORKI

Maxim Gorki and His Russia. By ALEXANDER KAUN. Cape. 15s.

A few years ago a Gaelic-speaking peasant of a remote island was induced to write the story of his life. After some time the old man produced a few prim and pedantic pages in a child's copybook. Some passages from Maxim Gorki's autobiography were translated for him. He exclaimed: "Is that all ye want?" and his own language thenceforth flowed naturally and without trouble. Between Gorki and that Gaelic peasant there existed in common a world of folk humanity. The naturalism of Gorki, which, a generation ago, startled and shocked, seemed mere matter of fact to the islander. The moral is that relativity cannot be avoided in literature.

Gorki came at a time when humanity was taking an interest in itself—an interest indicated by Socialism and concerned with the social strata which had been out of sight and out of mind. His intense humanity, his passionate concern for the simple, the oppressed, the unfortunate, long continued to catch us all like the universality of Whitman. It is, therefore, surprising to remember that Gorki, aided perhaps by the once thrilling suggestion of social revolt in his stories, was an immediate best seller and a vogue. In the Russia of '98, Tsarist society was captivated by his "ex-men," tramps and ragged wanderers. His picture appeared on the new post cards, cigarette cases and chocolate boxes. The simple took him to their hearts. Even the tramps heard of their new patron and demanded at street corners "a bottle of vodka in the name of Maxim Gorki." Relativity counted and perhaps the inherent romanticism of the writer. After all, "creatures that were once Men" suggests a fashion in outlook. Turning back to such a story as *The Birth of a Man*, we find more than peasant frankness. There is an element of sophisticated daring, of challenge to jaded taste. Reading the following by Count Alexey Tolstoy, politicians might regard with suspicion our new fashion of "hiking"!

> There is no doubt: Gorki prepared the revolutionary temperament in the intelligentsia (and partly in the proletariat) on the eve of the revolution of 1905. The romantic sensation of freedom, of wild abandon, crept into every cranny. As soon as summer vacations began, our youth would go off "bare-footing" to the places bespoken by Gorki. Those who were unable to go away arranged for domestic hoboing. Directly from their offices they would rush in boats across the Volga, where they built bonfires, drank vodka, sang songs about Stenka Razin, and philosophised, sprawled trouserless on the green slope.

Mr. Kaun does not deal with Gorki's influence on international literature, but to this day we have not escaped the fashion of hailing writers from the plough, the railroad and the tenement.

Maxim Gorki at the age of 64 lives at Capo di Sorrento, still energetic, despite an ancient tuberculosis of the lungs, industrious, vitally interested in the New Russia. Prof. Kaun's book is based on conversations and the well-known autobiographies. He is an enthusiastic admirer and his purpose is to place Gorki significantly against the background of Russia, to defend him from belittlers. Gorki's latest novel, the first two parts of which, *Bystander* and *The Magnet*, have already appeared in English, ends with the death of Lenin, but Prof. Kaun believes that Gorki belongs to a Russia which is past. He retells, leaning on the autobiographies, the story of Alexey Peshkov, the young lad of Nizhni Novgorod, ill-treated, yet fascinated by folk lore, hearing of a distant fairy tale world. "It was the lure of Western civilisation that beckoned to the semi-savage boy with Asiatic cheek-bones, a lure whose grip has not loosened with the passing of time. To this day Gorki is rhapsodic over the West and its urban civilisation; its glitter often blinded him to its seamy sides." Prof. Kaun describes Gorki's years as wanderer, Volga ship's-cook, underground baker, hawker, docker and journalist. Cruelty, savage brutality and political oppression gave the youth his impetuous zeal for social revolution but Prof. Kaun argues that Gorki has been always the artist and writer, that a kind impulsive heart has made him an indifferent politician. An interesting chapter on Tolstoy and the young writer of the people throws into relief his literary significance in Russian literature. An equally fine chapter on his much-interrupted friendship with Lenin shows how the literary man instinctively recoiled from the machine-like logic of the doctrinaire.

Gorki's imprisonment in 1905 by the Tsarists caused literary Europe to protest, yet during the first revolutionary years the pioneer instinctively revolted against the Bolshevik party When he decided patriotically to throw in his lot with them he became anathema to the *émigrés* and much of the intelligentsia. For some years in the New Russia Gorki devoted himself to saving intellectuals from prosecution or worse.

> He was the head of *World Literature*, Home of the Arts, Section of Historical Paintings, Union of Workers of the Verbal Arts, and so on, and so on, and so on. He not only presided at all our "Commissions," but had taken upon his shoulders all our troubles and needs, so that if one of us had a baby born, Gorki obtained a nipple, if one fell sick with typhus, he interceded for getting for him a place in the hospital, and if one wished to go to the country for a while, he wrote letters to various institutions for permits to use the Sestroretsk resort.
>
> I think that if one should collect all the letters written by Gorki to various institutions on behalf of Russian writers, there would accrue a goodly five or six volumes: in those days Gorki wrote no novels or stories—only these endless letters.

Mr. Kaun does not, unfortunately, tell us very much of the shocking period of famine in 1920, but by quotations he shows that distinguished *émigrés* have admitted Gorki's humane endeavours. The main accusation has been that Gorki tried to make the best of the revolutionary situation. His brusque good nature irritated those who did not want to be patronised.

Gorki has not lost faith in his people or in humanity, but one feels from his book that his faith has been sorely tried. He remains the hater of cruelty who refuses to face disillusion. His Russia is gone, that strange, crazy, pre-revolution Russia with its official espionage, its mixture of barbaric custom and unexpected kindness, a wide-flung land of saints and simple rogues, expressed in his story of the accused country station-master, who put on paper these words: "Here I have honestly written down everything I have stolen." AUSTIN CLARKE.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Charlotte Brontë. By E. F. BENSON. Longmans. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Benson has set out to approve the dictum that novelists make the best biographers by chastising an exception to the rule. His victim is Mrs. Gaskell. Mrs. Gaskell, when writing of Charlotte Brontë, did not forget that she was a novelist. She had a view of Charlotte which she was anxious to impress upon her readers. She was uncritical, accepting even Charlotte's view of "Lowood," a view so natural in a nine-year-old whose two beloved elder sisters had died there that one would suppose any biographer must have tested it. What is more, she was subject to the devitalising genius of her time, the spirit in which Baring Gould complacently ruined the West-country ballad of "The Three Drunken Maidens," and a more illustrious figure made the spokesman of a deputation which had visited Parnell say: "He received us as if we, and not he, had been the transgressors," when what the man actually said was: "He treated us as if *we* had committed adultery with *his* wife."

Mr. Benson is out to steer a middle course between the faith of Mrs. Gaskell and the fanaticism of a host of other writers. His manner is cool and unemotional, and his matter convincing. Charlotte does not emerge too well from the ordeal, but we feel at last that we know the facts about her. Mr. Benson is in debt to Clement Shorter, as all students must be: but, as will be seen presently, he does not always agree with him. Relying almost entirely upon Charlotte's letters, which he praises very highly, Mr. Benson holds up a convincing and formidable portrait. He sees her as "the pioneer of the movement for the independence of women," a compound of "masterly efficiency," "bleak censoriousness . . . coupled with utter pessimism," and "magnificent fortitude": strong willed, abnormally shy, mistrustful of strangers, righteous, independent, misanthropical. She lacked humour:

> This letter (to Henry Nussey, who had just proposed to her), irresistibly reminds us of Jane Austen at her best, and it is indeed no wonder that Charlotte in later years was so entirely incapable of appreciating her art, when we find her writing in all seriousness passages that could be cited as admirable examples of Jane Austen's humour.

Mr. Benson's idea of the relationship between Charlotte and Emily is new, to the best of my knowledge: and it certainly seems to be right. Mrs. Gaskell insisted that Charlotte watched over Emily with tender care. Romer Wilson made her out a kind of devil. Mr. Benson shows that the two were aloof, if not positively antagonistic, and that the family division for a long

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DENT

time was Charlotte and Branwell, Emily and Anne. Charlotte's insistence that Emily, the least fitted for such uprooting, should accompany her to Brussels, is hardly evidence of sisterly love: and Mr. Benson shows that even when they were writing novels in the same house, Charlotte and Emily did not discuss their work together. The change in the family grouping came with Branwell's disgrace. As he deteriorated, Charlotte drew farther and farther away from him. She, who had coped, morally, at any rate, with her passion for M. Héger, coldly and angrily despised Branwell for failing to cope with his passion for his employer's wife. Mr. Benson proves his account of it to be a fabrication, but this is beside the mark: Charlotte believed him. It was Emily who now gave him sympathy, and Mr. Benson makes a very good case for his taking a small share in *Wuthering Heights*. It was certainly Charlotte's discovery of Emily's poems, and her insistence on their publication, which began the career of the three "Bells"; but Mr. Benson is going farther than many will care to follow when he ascribes the writing of *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* to chance:

> Had it not been for Charlotte's discovery of Emily's poems two years before, and for the failure of her scheme to set up school, it is possible that neither of them would have been written. The Misses Brontë would have had a boarding school for girls at Haworth Passage, and it would have kept them busy.

Mr. Benson breaks new ground with his discovery that Charlotte, after refusing the estimable Mr. Nicholls, realised her folly and positively pursued him. "Then, having herself worked for and triumphantly carried her scheme to a successful issue, she attributed it all to Providence." He establishes a new point about M. Héger—one of the points upon which he differs from Shorter. Shorter, while maintaining that all Charlotte's novels were founded on her own experience, will not admit this in the case of *Villette*. In spite of having seen the four letters, for some reason he does not wish to think that Charlotte was in love with M. Héger.

> "M. Héger," he says, "kindled her intellectual impulses, and that was no small thing. That he won any very great control over her moral nature there is no reason to believe."

Mr. Benson sets the matter right. He shows, too, that when the shadow of the affair was removed, and Charlotte had her Mr. Nicholls, she was happier for those last months than ever before. Another difference, his view of Charlotte's feeling for Ellen Nussey, seems to be rather the difference between the years 1932 and 1906 than anything of deep importance. With regard to Branwell's possible share in *Wuthering Heights*, Mr. Benson is more probably right than his predecessor. It remains only to congratulate Mr. Benson on a distinguished piece of work, level headed, admirably written, and interesting as any novel, which should be a permanent addition to biographical literature.

L. A. G. STRONG.

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House for Sale. By ELISSA LANDI. Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.

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Mr. Grant Watson, whose excursions into fiction are too infrequent, has written a curious and arresting book in *Moonlight in Ur*. Let no fastidious reader be deterred by the romantic title, which suggests something between *Chu Chin Chow* and *The Blue Lagoon*. There is indeed plenty of moonlight in the story, and a hint of mystical philosophy; but it reflects a subtle rather than a facile mind, and, above all, it is clearly the expression of a rich imaginative experience. It seems improbable that a citizen of Ur should have survived from the period of the Third Dynasty into our own day, but Mr. Grant Watson describes the life of that time so confidently and convincingly, and with so little apparent effort, that one is tempted to believe that he has himself shared it. Yet it is very possible that if in fact he had done so the book would have been the poorer for it. The trouble with much fiction of to-day, and perhaps of yesterday, too, is that it is all too true, invention being ousted by memory. The novelist who relies for his material largely on his personal and actual experience is too little apt to demand of himself that intense imaginative concentration by which alone fiction of the first order is produced, with the result that his thin trickle of fancy is merged in a broad river of disguised reminiscence. Among other things, he is tempted to offer us—and the temptation is seldom resisted—pages and even chapters of dialogue that is "just like life," just like the conversation we may overhear in a railway carriage; and I for one would rather overhear it in a railway carriage than find it diligently recorded between the covers of a novel. Mr. Grant Watson, by the very nature of his subject, is immune from any such temptation; and he has resisted the temptation to go to the other extreme and make too much of its purely exotic and decorative elements. He assumes, legitimately enough, that in its essentials human nature was very little different in that remote epoch from what it is to-day. We are made (he would agree) of the same psychological stuff as were these ancient Chaldees; in them we recognise ourselves, and this recognition, this finding of the familiar in the midst of the strange, is inevitably a condition of our pleasure in the book. Our similarities are profound, our differences superficial and largely a matter of social convention. The story opens with quiet audacity. It appears that in Ur of the Chaldees orthodox religion enjoined that every virgin, as soon as she emerged from childhood, must go to the temple of Nana, goddess of love, and there be deflowered (and so sanctified) by a nameless god who would present himself in the persons of any strangers visiting the city. This would seem to have been one of the wiser ordinances of ancient religion, and there is perhaps a case for reviving it. But there were cruel disadvantages, the chief being that any love born of these ritual embraces was doomed to subsequent frustration, the man impersonating the god being thereby disqualified for marriage with the woman so possessed. This seems a perfect recipe for unhappiness, and Mr. Grant Watson makes the most of its romantic possibilities. He shows us an amorous idyll of the temple, followed by years of grief and separation, by a belated reunion, and then tragedy. I do not propose to summarise the plot more particularly; for, good though it is, it is not of the essence of the matter. As a piece of construction it

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is not impeccable. The story is broken in the middle of a big time-gap, which is inadequately filled, later on, by a dramatic (retrospective) narrative. But to a book so refreshingly different from the general run, much can be forgiven.

Miss Phyllis Bentley belongs, I will not say to a duller, but certainly to a more sober school of fiction. *Inheritance* is a long book, crowded with characters and incidents, and extending over several generations. It is written with great intelligence and dramatic power. The scene is Yorkshire, and we are in Miss Bentley's debt chiefly for her vivid and memorable picture (it has a quality that suggests permanence) of the period of the first machine-breaking riots. It cannot be said that she breaks new ground, or that she illuminates life for us at unexpected points; but this is perhaps more than one has a right to demand of a novelist who has the courage to be obvious, and the gift of holding one's attention, not only by her narrative skill, but by her own honest absorption in the lives of her *dramatis personæ*. The novel is divided into six books, of which the first, I think, is the best. At the end one rises with renewed respect for Miss Bentley's considerable powers, and with the sense of having enjoyed the company of real people who are interesting even in their ordinariness—but also with the feeling that this family chronicle might have rambled on for ever, to no particular artistic purpose, but for the inexorable fact that it had to stop somewhere short of 1932. Here, nevertheless, is an excellent and substantial meal for any reader with a liking for solid fare. It is, by virtue of its length and scope, the most ambitious book that Miss Bentley has so far written; and it cannot fail to add to her reputation.

In *The Master of the House*, Miss Radclyffe Hall commands respect by her sincerity of purpose, her earnest pains and her spiritual enthusiasm, rather than by the book she has actually written. The theme, though it has been treated often enough before, is one that in sensitive hands need never fail to yield interest and illumination. In Christophe Marie Bénédit—and it is greatly to Miss Radclyffe Hall's credit that the fact is delicately and gradually suggested, never stated—the Christ spirit is reincarnated. We see Him in babyhood and childhood, with little Jan, the prospective ecclesiastic, as a foil to his natural saintliness. We see Him grow up. And we see Him, at the last, as "the Indestructible Compassion" walking to a crazy and heroic martyrdom. On the title-page these words are quoted: "... for ye know not when the Master of the House cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning." An admirable theme—but one's sympathy with the author's palpably good intentions is defeated by the mooing turgidity of her style, by a sad lack of humour in her portrayal of Provençal peasant-folk, and by a kind of sentimental archness that is offered in place of humour. The whole picture, in a word, is painfully and solemnly romanticised. But here (in case you should chance to like it better than I do) is a passage between the rowdy "giant called Ravous" and Mère Mélanie, to whose café he brings a drunken friend:

> Said he, having finally run out of insults: "My comrade is being grossly insulted! He is drunk, you say, well then, I tell you, no! And if he is drunk, then I ask you, what of it? I also am now about to get drunk, very drunk, and for that I require a chair, and a table on which I can rest my bottle. Yes, and what I require I intend to take!" And he threw back his shoulders and bulged his muscles. "Uno, dous, tres!" he boomed ominously, "Who, I wish to know, is going to get up before I trouble myself to remove him?"
>
> No one trembled, since no one had understood a word, his furious face merely causing much laughter; but the little violinist was now really afraid, and this not without reason perhaps, knowing Ravous. Sidling across to Mère Mélanie: "Coax him, ma chérie—try coaxing," he whispered.
>
> So Mère Mélanie patted the monster's cheek, then she ruffled his hair: "Sois gentil," she entreated, "do not threaten your poor little Mère Mélanie who has always felt a tenderness for her big Ravous. Is it kind to bully your Mère Mélanie who depends upon clients to gain her living? Come and kiss your little Mère Mélanie. . . ."
>
> "Ah, that no!" growled Ravous, looking suddenly scared.
>
> "Tafort!" hiccoughed his comrade, "Go and kiss the old whore!"
>
> Ravous scowled, then he gulped hard, closing his eyes: "Bono Maire de Dieu. . . ." he groaned as he kissed her.
>
> The room rang with applause.

This, it must be understood, is one of the lighter moments.

House for Sale is a quiet story, told in the character of a middle-aged widow, whose view of her children—pleasant ordinary people—is the book's main concern. *Sophka*, by an author whom his translator describes as "the antithesis of Western Proust," is a more primitive and violent affair, yet has, to my mind, more colour than vigour.

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FACE VALUES

The Face of England. By EDMUND BLUNDEN. Longmans 3s. 6d.

England. By RONALD CARTON. Black. 7s. 6d.

The task of interpretation is never more generous of opportunity or difficult of approach than when the subject is England. It is a task primarily of elimination, for the associations come crowding too thick, and the writer may easily lose his sense of proportion. Too many have in the past exhausted themselves with completeness in a very travail of travel, gathering less of the true essence after all than may be stored in some single line of inspired verse. The loftiest view is ultimately no more representative than the few yards of hedgerow where one sat and ate one's lunch, or the corner of barn, with rusty implements summering in the nettles. It comes to this, that whether we approach our land on the big or little scale it matters not; only genius, the inspired leap of love beyond itself, can kindle it with the life of its own fugitive skies.

First, to give appropriate accent to the title of Mr. Blunden's survey—*The FACE of England*. Therein lies his genius of elimination. He sticks to the surface, excluding any but implicit depth in his treatment of the passing hour; yet following him we are ever on the edge of mystery. It is his to show the natural play of the English country's many-sided activities—her silences and suspense, too—not just wild life alone, not just village life, but all in relation to their surroundings and the hour, even as the stroller may chance upon them. In just under two hundred pages Mr. Blunden has captured the shy spirit of her daily self, as elusive as Echo. I doubt whether such a one has been in so narrow a prison since Ariel was confined. He has taken her in the poet's snare of the incidental.

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out of their variety, may appear one man's portrait of a land where nature and man are of a good mutual understanding." This realisation also was his clue that "our sketch-book, so to speak, has a dearer secret than our finished canvases."

This is a book of sketches, moments of landscape, poems in verse and prose, from a sigh of the air to the physiognomy of the market. Few are more than a few pages long, yet not just heaped together, but so unobtrusively ordered as to make, as it were, a gentle rainbow rising from winter, through summer, into winter. Actually he has held up the mirror to one East Anglian corner, but when the reader looks in it he finds reflections true of any or every corner of his country, which is an acknowledgment of right interpretation.

Mr. Blunden seldom mentions places by name (except when following the shades of the poets Clare and Bloomfield); his field, his stream, his sky are anywhere to those that have eyes to see and ears to hear. Who else can give us winter in a sentence? "The country is coffined up in a leaden desolate cloud." Then a gleam of humour on the loquacious sexton: "You would see the church, but he prefers that you should hear it." He visits by chance, in a little country town, "a drawing-room of the most delightful satin silentness." The cricket match is already a favourite of literature, and it was proper that one should be included here. There are echoes of tones of the past—or one's ear seems to detect them: naturally, since the England Mr. Blunden inherits has already been the theme of similar devoted minds. His passage on an invalid hen, a solitary, is of equal sensibility with that of Gilbert White's on a hen who made friends with a horse, or of Cowper's account of "Puss, Tiney and Bess," his tame hares.

He writes with the easy intimacy of a letter writer, and the chance happenings he describes are his vision of the essential England. These are her features, and no living writer can so immediately bring her soul into her face. It is the divine chance of happenings in field or stream, with overhead the chancing English sky, that are her quick expressions, her moods, her stirring in her dreams. And it is that the delight of the peradventure may still be hers that the true rurality of England—neither playground nor park—must be preserved. Her fortuity is her life, Mr. Blunden's book implies in every page. A "table-book" it truly is, a book of beauty and refreshment, to be read slowly for the spirit that breathes from every sentence. I do not know where else to find words more sweetly wedded to their subject, a sentiment so controlled, a kindliness itself so near to truth.

While Mr. Blunden dwells Mr. Carton goes about, and each discovers England in his own way. He sails round her coasts, up her rivers, and when they are no further navigable walks beside them till he has climbed the hills of their sources, and there, invited by the sweeping prospect, strikes inland. For one discovers, or seems to, that, darting as his choice sometimes appears, he has a method of following where possible the routes suggested by range or river.

The unqualified title, *England*, surely takes some living up to. But Mr. Carton has attacked his task with vigour and enterprise and, most important, individuality. A certain comparison with Defoe, Cobbett and others who have systematically toured the Island may be incurred by the quality of Mr. Carton's previous work of the kind. One may say at once that the stature of Mr. Carton's prose is equal to any comparison. He writes always as his occasion demands—that is to say, well, and when need be finely, sustainedly, and with the flash of personal force.

His sensibility is a true touchstone, as is early revealed by his realisation of the Fen country.

> To me at least it is this remarkable quality of offering sanctuary to the spirit wounded by the turmoil and injustice of the world of daily work that makes the seaward parts of East Anglia so vitally attractive. . . . Nothing here will welcome the stranger or repel him; nothing will remind him of himself. There is no boundary, that he can see, to limit his journeying; no barrier to stem the tide of his most personal reflections.

To the many other varieties of scene he is as quickly responsive. He conjures the spirit of Bath in pleasant strolling equally with the grey and legendary places of Cornwall. He roams to the north, even to where the coast of Kirkcudbright is "jagged as the edge of a broken plate." Salisbury he understands, and the quality of its cathedral: "A direct and inspiring beauty and an atmosphere of triumphant tranquillity." He has a perception of Chester as mellow as Henry James's in *The Ambassadors*: "There falls upon it continually the light of the past, so that the simplest act is somehow fraught with romantic significance, touched with the grace of associations that prevent it being commonplace." He ends, suitably, with a chapter on London, that essentially homely city.

Mr. Carton knows his facts; there is plenty of historical information in his pages; but he also has that genius which can go above and beyond them and converse with the spirit of a place. He has described typical portions of every county, yet he has been faithful to his title in knitting this diversity into a (comparatively) little unity of some 250 pages in the reader's mind. He has done so, perhaps, by the sense of the sea, which thunders, we feel, not so far away wherever we may be with him. He takes a coast-line when possible and follows its indentations, its rugged fortress-rocks or low-banked quiet reaches. So we keep the impression of the sea-girt Isle, and that, possibly, was part of his intention.

Mr. Carton, then, is no mere guide to famous places, nor is he an exploiter of the sentimental. He has that eye and that philosophy which make him a revealing companion. It is because, though he likes to tarry in sequestered corners, the traffic and change of 1932 run in his pages as in the England he describes, making it quick with present life through the ghost of the past, that we are glad to follow him over those same ways that writers of other generations have led us, and are stimulated by comparison of his findings with theirs into awareness of the workings of Time. There are many colour-plates by well-known landscape illustrators which greatly embellish the book, and are representative of the variety of the scenes therein described. ADRIAN BELL.

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BELL

this revolting-looking volume. It must have been designed, if at all, with an eye to arresting attention on a crowded railway book-stall. The red and yellow wrapper is only surpassed for ugliness by the blue and orange cover. The margins are inadequate, and the whole thing looks as though it had been put together by someone completely ignorant of the first elements of lay-out. It is consoling to observe that it was not printed in Scotland. But it is high time publishers realised that they share, with advertisement agents and film magnates, some responsibility for corrupting the public taste.

Assuming, however, that one can read without seeing, this is an interesting and fair synopsis of the Scottish art of story-telling. By choosing only tales with a Scottish setting the anonymous editor has stressed the national aspect of his anthology, and tempted one to write a violently national review. To point out, for example, that Scotland's contribution to the world of letters has not been so slight as it tends to appear when all Scottish writers, except Scott and Burns, are hailed as Englishmen is to seek also in the tales themselves some proof of their nationality. Does it lie in the straightforward tackling of a story, the avoidance of literary experiment or preciousness? Or perhaps a little in the tendency, well illustrated here, to live cheek-by-jowl with the supernatural? But to treat these stories thus would be to turn them into the desperate testimonial of a little country which fain would rival its more fecund neighbour. Better leave Scotland out of it, nor test the walls of Jericho with a tin whistle.

From Scott to Mr. Eric Linklater is not, in terms of time, a very long step: in terms of literature it is immense. Scott and Mr. George Moore, for example, are both children of the same century, and yet their respective estimations of their craft could not be more different. For Scott the story was everything, and few men have been richer in invention than he was. As a teller of tales he would have ranked himself higher perhaps than, but not fundamentally different from, the music-hall artist. Scott respected himself because he was a gentleman, not because he was a novelist, just as Byron was pleased to be a poet but proud to be a lord. The results are evident in their work. To entertain was their profession. Beyond entertainment they owed nothing to their public except (for Scott who was a moral man) not to corrupt it. The standards of entertainment, at least in the sphere of story-telling, were not exacting in those days; the standard of possible corruption was. I wonder what enterprising publisher to-day would print the Waverley Novels as they stand and, if he did, what would be their reception.

But in France a conviction has always lurked that how one did a thing was at least as important as what one did. And gradually this belief began to percolate into English and Scottish letters. A public for entertainment in its rawest form still existed, was in fact increasing with the spread of so-called education. In literature the direct descendants of Scott are the Marie Corellis and subsequent best-sellers of their days, and some responsibility for their work must lie with the man who believed that, in paying his debts with his pen, he was but doing the duty of an honourable person. At the same time a new school was growing up which believed that a good story would be better well than ill told, and it is that theory that has led to the modern distinction between literature and books that are just books: a distinction that has nothing to do with inventiveness, otherwise Edgar Wallace would rank far above Aldous Huxley. Scott probably never recognised the difference between the *Two Drovers* and *Wandering Willie's Tale*. But later writers did, and chose Willie for their guide. *Thrawn Janet* is the lineal descendant of Wandering Willie, and as a tale no better, because Scott could tell a story, if he cared to. The importance of *Thrawn Janet* lies in the fact that Stevenson has discovered just why Wandering Willie told a better tale than the author of the Waverley Novels. And even in Scotland, where narrative still ranks lower than instruction and the story-teller is a mountebank, Stevenson did achieve this: that his successors have increasingly measured the goodness of the story by the aptness of the telling. The result is that, in this anthology, the worst-told tale is by the greatest man among them all, Scott's *Two Drovers*. And this is all the more striking because he had here about the best situation in the whole book, only he didn't know what to do with it.

The truth is, of course, that an adequate technique makes the plot less important, some have thought even superfluous. S. R. Crockett in the *Tutor of Curlywee*, Neil Munro in *War*, with the minimum of invention, achieve the maximum of effect. John Buchan with his magnificent imagination does not enjoy the *succès d'estime* of Neil Gunn, whose situations are of the most tenuous, while the atmosphere he creates by sheer skill is so solid that one could almost touch it with one's fingers. Often in reading modern literature one is reminded of Albertine's *géographie pittoresque* of ices: temples, churches, obelisques, rocks and the *Colonne Vendôme*, but all at bottom ices, ices, nothing but ices. What the story-teller needs to-day is a tiny and, by rough-and-ready standards, unimportant nucleus out of which he draws all its implications and all its inherent emotion, till one can practically see, hear, smell and feel it, as with the *feelies* in Mr. Huxley's *Brave New World*. So far has the art of story-telling travelled from the clumsy articulation of the *Two Drovers*.

This process of development can be traced here almost, but not quite, all the way. To Scott's untrammelled imagination Stevenson and John Buchan add the desire to make their skill as story-tellers worthy of the tale they have to tell. And upon that realisation of the writer's active and responsible share in his story follows almost inevitably a keener consciousness of the story's intellectual and psychological "bouquet." *Beattock for Moffat* is simply an account of a dying man's train-journey back from London to his native soil, yet Mr. Cunninghame Graham's understanding has made that man's death more poignant than the death of Robin Oig M'Combich. *Approfondir* is definitely the order of the day, but the curious thing is that in none of the stories printed here does it run to its logical conclusion, as it has done, for example, in the work of Katherine Mansfield. The plot still retains, slightly modified, its pristine importance. Mr. Cunninghame Graham is an old man now, and yet he seems to have approximately fixed the form of the modern Scottish short story. To understand why this is so, we are, I think, thrown back on national considerations, however unwillingly. Perhaps we are as a race too home-spun to pirouette with the technical grace of a Joyce or a Mrs. Woolf. Perhaps the inherent Scottish contempt for the purely creative still prevents our writers from taking their art seriously in itself. Where a Muse survives only on sufferance, she will not have leisure to start pedicuring her toes. Or it may be something in the

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peculiar nature of our civilisation, a formula of life which was passed on to us more or less ready-made, and which we have never entirely assimilated. The Scots do seem to retain a primitive sense of the terror, the charm, or the power of certain things: hatred and love, for example, death and the supernatural. They cannot adapt themselves to Mrs. Woolf's despair or Proust's impartial curiosity, for which Swann's sufferings were no more interesting and no less than Madame Swann's flowers.

Only two of the writers represented here seem to have passed beyond the intermediate formula and accepted the modern tendency to twist story-telling away from narrative and towards sheer analysis. Of these Mr. Macnair Reid is the least successful; he could still learn much from Katherine Mansfield. Mr. Neil Gunn has attempted the ambitious task of applying the analytical method to that borderland between the natural and supernatural where the Highlander moves with so much ease. If he achieves less than the perfection of his style justifies one in expecting, that is probably because to throw light upon the extra-intellectual regions of the mind requires more, not less, intellectual clarity. Mr. Gunn, one suspects, feels his subject but has not yet learned to detach it from feeling. French thought might help him to find himself. Scottish letters are at present too much influenced by England and Germany. *Le Grand Meaulnes*, for example, conveys a far more vivid impression of something outside and inimical to the formula of civilisation then either of Mr. Gunn's stories printed here.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF DOUBT

The Philosophy of Descartes. By A. BOYCE GIBSON. Methuen. 12s. 6d.

Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature. By JOHN LAIRD. Methuen. 12s. 6d.

The greatest of all philosophers, who proved his greatness by omitting to write a book, has immortalised the method of doubt. But though Socrates himself was content to rest in the confession of ignorance, what he taught to others was that perplexity is the first step towards knowledge, and he never exalted scepticism as an ideal. That was left to disciples who had learnt but half the lesson, and of them, perhaps, it might be said that they furnished the Athenians with a posthumous excuse for putting the master to death. It is a fact of deep significance that modern philosophy also—if we accept Descartes as its father—begins with the mingled profession of doubt and certitude which might, as Mr. Boyce Gibson suggests, have been written in the form *dubito ergo sum*. Like Socrates, Descartes was no Pyrrhonist. To find the indubitable, and thence to derive the true path of science and philosophy, was his goal. Where he suffered, as compared with any ancient philosopher, was in the wealth of presuppositions bequeathed to him by mediaeval tradition. Some of the most fundamental notions, such as substance and causal efficacy, he quite forgot to doubt, and it may be that his radical problem arose out of an uncriticised dualism of matter and mind. Yet Descartes was always candid in intention, and we should agree with Mr. Boyce Gibson in rejecting the view that the part assigned to God in the Cartesian system was chiefly a measure of precaution against ecclesiastical censure. The depth of his personal religion, it may be impossible, not to say impertinent, to gauge, but his attempt to prove that the reality of the Perfect Being was involved in his own imperfection, and required as a guarantee of knowledge, belongs to the very substance of his philosophy.

How to pass from essence to existence, or from the irrefutable awareness of self to the non-mental existence of objects? In some such form the Cartesian problem is so familiar that it is almost startling to hear from Mr. Boyce Gibson that his book is the first of its kind to appear in English. Be this as it may, we cannot but feel that there was room for more of the compression so well exemplified in the chapter on "the vindication of human knowledge." The three "moments" in the system are the assertion of *cogito ergo sum*, the recognition of "clear and distinct ideas" as a general criterion, and the postulation of God's necessary existence. Whether each of these has independent validity, or whether Descartes is involved, once if not twice, in circular argument is the critical question, acutely and fairly examined by Mr. Boyce Gibson. If the self is its own justification, it may imply the being of God without assuming it as a guarantee. Replying to Gassendi, Descartes also repudiated the charge of circularity as regards the relation between God and the clear and distinct ideas, but the form of his defence was scarcely convincing. It might have been wiser to maintain that the mutual implication of ultimate truths allowed of a transition from one to another in either direction without logical fallacy.

Hume's case is utterly different. An unbeliever by nature and profession, he brushes aside all the Cartesian certainties. Reason, for him, spins coherent cobwebs, or, in another aspect, is the appointed slave of the passions. God is withdrawn into the frozen atmosphere of Deism, while the identical self becomes a superfluous fiction. More than this, Hume doubts his own doubts, and protests that they fail to convince him. As an agent, he is undisturbed by the lack of rational proof, but, as Mr. Laird says, it is vain to charge him with make-belief, for in make-belief his philosophy consists. If he were now recalled to life, would his scepticism run to the length of wondering why men continue to write books about him? Here, perhaps, his taste for notoriety would prevail over other considerations, but frankly, a learned and laborious book like Mr. Laird's does provoke that question. When Kant paid Hume the stupendous compliment of waking from his dogmatic slumber to refute him, modern philosophy was still comparatively young. But since Kant's day so many haymakers have tossed the old material into the air before rearranging it to their own satisfaction that it begins to look almost dry enough to cart away. The queer thing about the man, for all his scepticism, is that the basis of his whole philosophy, namely, the doctrine that every "idea" originates in a preceding "impression," is merely an impudent dogma masquerading as the lesson of experience. And again, though Mr. Laird may be right in contending that Hume succeeds in producing an "impression of reflection" to account for our belief in necessary connection, it would be difficult to invent a worse piece of psychology, and only by ingenious devices does Hume disguise the fact that he is simultaneously denying the genuineness of *cause* and declaring that belief in it is the *effect* of custom.

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The most "posh"—or should it be poshiest?—schools of criticism are very busy lifting the academic nose at the literature of escape. When Mr. Leavis so classifies Mr. de la Mare's poetry he betrays in himself a subconscious fear—he knows that Mr. de la Mare (and even Mr. Noyes) dares do something, and go somewhere, that he would not dare. It is the old complaint of the hen when the duckling took to the water, of the ostrich—a fine-looking bird that frequents desert places—against the eagle especially, but against any bird that flies. The distinction between literature of escape and literature that is in accord, sympathy or what-not with that grim little business the modern mind, is, of course, so much bally-hoo. All art is a way of escape, and so of discovery; and if one is distilling drugs, there is as much of pure dope in Miss Stein as in Mrs. Glyn, and far more in Mr. Joyce. What can be said fairly is that fiction is, specifically, the literature of escape—whether the novel be by Dumas or Proust, by Mr. Priestley or Mrs. Woolf. This year there seem to be—perhaps it is an illusion—more novels than ever: it must be, I suppose, to let us escape from economics—and here are thirteen works of fiction which can be recommended. I do not think there's a word about the gold standard in any of them, and there is no echo of the old song, once more coming into favour, "Douglas, Douglas, tender and true!"

I have read them all but the first. In it I have read Mr. Lynd's admirable excuse—he turns apology into a fine art, and so apologises when he need not, for his selection is obviously one full of entertainment. There are, of course, things I miss—but is it not the object of an anthologist to furnish the critic with a grievance? Miss Maconechy, Mr. Davies, Miss James, Miss Coyle, Mr. Stewart and Mr. Wodehouse—all in their very different ways, tell love-stories. Neither Miss James nor Miss Coyle has much merit—their tales are conventionalised, and the interest in the two books is entirely in the setting, not the people. We like the hospital, and we like the French chateau and the American house; but the women are boring, and the men of the kind which only a woman novelist can either believe in or like. Quite too deplorably He. Mr. Stewart, who wrote *Sanatorium*, had a slender, delicate talent, and *Ferney* is a gentle, persuasive tale, with a genuine moral force. Mr. Davies, who has a touch of genius, is keeping it very much under in *Count Your Blessings*—he should take the lesson of his title to himself. This book, with its theatrically untheatrical brothel, its dramatically undramatic harlot, is a sadly bogus affair; only occasionally in the writing and some comic scenes are we reminded of the fine *Rings on her Fingers* and his short stories. Miss Maconechy is deliberately and naughtily clever: she has the makings of a tragic artist, and she prefers to show us how absolutely she can control her poor women, how consummately she can ridicule them. The story is in consequence arid, but must be read for some brilliant passages. Mr. Wodehouse is not alas! at his best. *Dr. Sally* is a short book, yet the soda has drowned the whisky; also there is far, far too much about golf in these hundred and fifty odd pages. Still one realises what a genius the man has if one reads directly after *Dr. Sally* Mr. Raleigh's *Excess Baggage*. I don't suppose Mr. Raleigh can help feeling like a wet hen, but he should not shake himself at us. Not since every little sober-sides was imitating Jerome K. Jerome have I met such stuff as this—

> He finished the champagne, and made the lobster mayonnaise look perfectly ridiculous, but he had no complaints—except internal ones that evening—

This is a very sad book.

Three books of my thirteen are religious novels, and two are extremely good books. The indifferent one is Mr. Saxon Mills' *Interruption*. He asks us to believe that all England—except a few hard-boiled capitalists, chappies and night-lights—would fall on its knees if there appeared for two minutes, above Piccadilly Circus and in the sky, a "huge, appalling" cross in blue fire, "fifteen hundred feet in height with a cross-bar of three hundred feet in width, and the base of the cross four hundred feet above average street level." A most unconvincing supposition. *Interruption* is a very poor exercise in the religious thriller, of which perhaps the best in this century was Guy Thorne's *When it was Dark*. Mr. Stonor's *The End of Mr. Davidson* is a first-rate piece of work, quiet, imaginative, admirably written. It is the story of how death comes to Mr. Davidson—the story of his last day, the day which no one guesses is to be fatal, the day when his customary irritabilities are put down to anything but the real reason, as they have been for years past. We meet his wife and his children as well as him, all drawn with a careful, impartial veracity that is stunningly definitive. This is the most promising first book I have read since Miss Norah Hoult's *Poor Women*. Miss Cather's *Shadows on the Rock* is nothing like so good a story; but in its imaginative truth, its eager, unflagging desire to escape, its soaring, undaunted spirit it exceeds all the rest. It is a tale of Quebec and of France, a tale of that eagle-eyed faith that has been celebrated in the great history of Parkman. Auclair, the apothecary, and his daughter Cécile are the chief persons in this ordered story, a book written with a sense of spiritual space rarely to be found in modern fiction.

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attempt to achieve his life's ambition, the discovery of the North-West passage. In *The Needle Watcher*, Mr. Blaker has written a fine and conscientious reconstruction of the story; of the arrival of Adams, who came to be known as An-jin, the needle watcher, because of his possession of a compass, of how at first he was forced to stay and later refused to leave, of his dealings with Magome, who became his father-in-law, and of his misunderstandings with his own countrymen when, years after he landed, they came to Japan but failed to produce the vessel which he wanted to sail to the North. Much of the descriptive writing has force and brilliance:

> The sun was at its height and their two shadows were the shadows of their great straw hats; discs that touched, rim to rim, in the soft white dust of the road. Behind them was the castle. . . . Its strength was of stone and mortar, of bronze pieces and of powder and shot. The cement of this bulwark was the mortar that held the stones together; it was also the judgment of Ieyasu that picked his men, and the peculiar genius of him that held them. The palace was a symbol, in the sprawl of the city, of the city's unity. And the city's unity was the unity of a storm.

The delineation of character is as careful and as subtle as that of places, and Mr. Blaker's men and women are never merely mummies resuscitated to provide material for an historical novel; they fall inevitably into place in a story in which the very cobwebs of antiquity assume a pattern, and that pattern has a vital and enthralling significance.

The Iron Crown is also written with a careful attention to detail which does not threaten the dominant conception of the tragedy. It is less distinguished than *The Needle Watcher*, only because at times it tends to become a mere succession of incidents, exciting enough, but too loosely put together. Its hero is an adventurer of a type familiar in history and in legend, a Robin Hood of Croatia. In some ways the parallel with Moses is a closer one, for Marko Ubranitch killed an overseer in a fit of rage, and from that moment felt that all his actions had the compulsion of fate. He became an outlaw and a bandit, robbing only the rich and the oppressor, remaining at heart a child and a savage, until he came to be both to himself and others a symbol of the poor and oppressed peasants who were his countrymen. When, after he has received unswerving loyalty and been continuously victorious, he is at last betrayed and defeated, the virtue goes out of him and he deteriorates; the force which drove him on was inside him, not, as he imagined, the Will of God. Herr von Gagern's novel of Croatia, its people, and its personification was well worth translating, and the translator has done his work well.

With Thomas Wainewright, friend and contemporary of Lamb and Blake, adventure took the form of disease. Whether or not his cruelty was due to an illness resembling sleepy sickness, he became a cold-blooded poisoner who designed his crimes with the ingenuity of an artist and delighted to look on the sufferings of his victims. Mr. Black has retold the tale well enough, but might have been better advised to make it a straightforward biography; the fiction form at times seems rather forced.

In *Sidestreets*, Miss Murat has depicted a woman who recognises no law but her own wishes. She becomes the mistress of various men, but a certain pride in her own body makes her keep it as a gift and not as a commodity; she has in fact attained that fictitious "freedom" which is supposedly modern. It is impossible to have adventure unless there are obstructions to be overcome, and it is not until Fleur meets a Galahad in modern dress that she realises that there is something for which risks must be taken. When Paul's brother, with whom she has been living, tells that paragon the kind of woman who has fallen in love with him, she nearly commits suicide; but the end of the book leaves her with her adventure just beginning. This first novel, by an author of nineteen, is crude and violent, but not without promise. The same can hardly be said of *Women Live Too Long*, a commonplace story of an actress who struggles to success and finds it turn to dust and ashes because her husband, whom she loves, is unfaithful with a woman whom he compares with his wife; his previous infidelities had been with negligible characters! Miss Delmar has apparently written with one eye on Hollywood (she was responsible for the film, *Bad Girl*), but that does not excuse her novel's extreme dullness.

The author of *The Defendant Soul* has, in *Thralgate of Layland Hall*, written a novel which is hard to classify. The story is a simple and improbable one of a man whose marriage has become a convenience and who gets with child an Eurasian girl, the daughter of one of the stockmen on his estate. He flinches in the middle of what is perhaps the first and last adventure of his life, with the result that he loses the girl and kills his wife. Mr. Forrest has a curiously elusive style, which makes all his characters appear to move in a slight mist, the typically English squire, his elegant wife, the conventional parson, and the weird dancing girl. Few readers will deny that Mr. Forrest can create an atmosphere, but some of them may declare it to be a fog. *Praise the Lord!* on the other hand, is almost distressingly concrete, and gives a savage account of a freak American religion, of which the ineffable Sister Theresa is the exponent. The adventure of Jim Grims consists of his struggle to free himself from the fanaticism which had overwhelmed his unbalanced mother, and the sordid by-ways in which his struggle occurs are faithfully described. This depressing novel does for to-day what Mrs. Strachey's *Shaken by the Wind* did, perhaps with less satire and more power, for the fanaticism of an earlier time.

The Welcome Inn was not the place to look for adventure, although there was plenty of "sport" there, and *Time, Please!* makes no pretence of describing people or events out of the ordinary. Miss Lindsay has not made her rustic characters "literary," and her story is pleasant enough reading; but all the outstanding happenings of at least a year in a country "pub" seem to have been crowded into the one brief day with which her tale is concerned. The canvas is too congested to be convincing.

VIRGINIA WOOLF: A FRENCHMAN'S VIEW

Le Roman Psychologique de Virginia Woolf. Par FLORIS DELATTRE. J. Vrin.

It is a delicate matter to write illuminatingly and at length upon a contemporary writer. Perhaps that is why it has been left to a Frenchman to make the first exhaustive examination of the work of Mrs. Virginia Woolf. M. Delattre being a French and not an English professor, has concentrated on his theme the same degree of solid, academic attention, which he has already devoted to the classics. The result is an acute and lucid account of one of the most remarkable writers of the day. He sees Mrs. Woolf turning from the comfortable, external world of the twentieth century to the life of the mind, and evolving for her theme a new technique, perfecting a supple and elastic style which shall fitly express the changing moods of the soul. It is his contention that consciously or unconsciously she has been influenced by the philosophy of Bergson, just as Proust, Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce were influenced. Whether this is so or not, one of the chief difficulties of the "common reader" has, in fact, been Mrs. Woolf's preoccupation with the qualitative as opposed to the quantitative aspect of time. It is not without effort that one can enter into the intense, still mind of Lily Briscoe who could not distinguish between what is and what was, for whom the past which had contained Mrs. Ramsay was part of the present with the vision of her vividly present in the mind. When feeling is sufficiently concentrated, time, in the sense of abstract space, is defeated. "Mrs. Ramsay . . . cast her shadow on the step. There she sat."

M. Delattre points out that Mrs. Woolf's literary attitude is based as was Proust's on the belief that it is the involuntary memory of things past that brings true knowledge of reality. She therefore attempts as far as possible to detach psychological experience from the irrelevances of the external world. The inevitable result of such a method is a lack of solidity in the characters described. M. Delattre, maintaining that life is something other than this confusion of fragile appearances, feels that Mrs. Woolf's people never attain the unity that is acquired through the action of the will. They are the receptacles, simply, of impressions. Yet it is surely a sign that Mrs. Woolf is too good an artist to be bound by a theory that she does select the typical, the symbolic, and by so doing creates individuals, tenuous and remote certainly, but still always alive.

In spite of his admirable analysis of Mrs. Woolf's aim and method, M. Delattre seems bewildered by her last two novels. *Orlando* he describes as an attempt to solve the problem of the sexes, and of *The Waves*, "Aussi est-ce dans la beauté du style lui-même que réside, en dernière analyse, l'intérêt principal du plus récent roman de Virginia Woolf," he says, gazing in despair at the pale faces of her Olympians. On his own principles, it is

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strange that he should not hail *Orlando* as the beautiful fantasy it is, as one more testimony to the eternal quality of the spirit, the transitoriness of the material. It would seem, too, that in her most recent novel Mrs. Woolf merely followed her principles to their inevitable conclusion. Here is Proust's *memoire involontaire* used almost without reference to the external world. From the expression first of their subconscious life, then of their involuntarily awakened thoughts, the characters emerge gradually, though M. Delattre finds them no more than phantoms. One must agree that Mrs. Woolf is here, more than ever, the novelist for "ceux qui prennent un plaisir presque pareil au sien a l'observation et a la peinture de la vie psychologique."

M. Delattre does not see in the work of his novelist "cet équilibre des facultés créatrices qui en assure la durée." It may be that she is not, as Miss Sackville-West has suggested, really interested enough in Mrs. Brown. And yet to that criticism would she not be entitled to reply that she is concerned with the undiscovered country which is Mrs. Brown's soul? Her achievement is to have made it clearer that life is worth living. Such a belief, she explains "springs from the fact that when life throws up such treasures daily, daily suggests more than the most voluble can express, much as we admire the dead, we prefer life as it is."

AFTER THE BONFIRE

Bonfire: Stories out of Soviet Russia. Edited by S. KONOVALOV. Benn. 7s. 6d.

After the bonfire, what is left? For the artist and the poet, not very much: a glowing corner here, a charred piece of newsprint there. The conflagration has been too big, too many outlines have been burnt away. The writer, more than other artists, is at the mercy of tradition, for words are inseparable from ideas and emotions, and change slowly. A literary revolution is possible only with a tradition and vocabulary become almost sluggish by convention. What happens then in the literature of a people whose whole social, ethical and artistic fabric has been suddenly swept away? *Bonfire: Stories out of Soviet Russia* is in part an answer to this question.

The first thing to be said about Mr. Konovalov's collection of stories is that its object—to show Russian life to-day and to give examples of the new spirit in Soviet art—has been better achieved in films. The films are up to date, whereas the stories in *Bonfire* stop before the Five Year Plan, and so miss a vital influence in modern Russian life. As documentation, too, films are better; and they have succeeded in working out the technique of a new art to meet present conditions, while writers are still finding their way or dropping back into an older manner and a regret for what has been lost.

> You know, sometimes an electric bulb suddenly goes out. "Burnt out," you say. And if this burnt-out bulb is shaken, it will blaze out again and will burn for a little while longer. The tungsten threads break, and life is given back by the touching of the fragments. A short, unnatural, clearly doomed life—a fever, an over-brilliant heat, a flash. . . . I want to shake the heart of the burnt-out era, the heart-lamp, so that the broken threads touch.

Regret is not often so plainly stated in this book, but it underlies the recklessness and brutality of some of the stories, and finds an outlet in the lyrical or oppressive landscapes of others. Of the writers in an older tradition, Panteleimon Romanov succeeds in presenting the conflict between new and old manners without damage to his art: his story, "The Rye Cakes," which has for its theme a man's desertion of his country wife for a town mistress, is the best in the book, though not typical. At the other end of the scale is Babel, whose cavalry stories are remarkable examples of a fiction from which all emotion, even the fear of it, is absent. But he, too, is in a tradition—the tradition of the Caucasian story-tellers. Leonid Leonov has Babel's physical impact together with a far wider imaginative range and a strong literary personality. Detachment, an amused or lacerating brutality, recklessness, a peasant humour that can be pawky or sly, an acceptance of the physical and commonplace—these are the qualities one expects of Soviet fiction, and indeed finds. To some extent the authors represented here (twenty-four in all) have fallen back on "the method of notation rather than of creative analysis," as Mr. Konovalov points out. But this factual quality is as old as the Russian novel itself. How bracing it can be in a book the keynote of which is emptiness!

OLD TALES RENEWED

The House on the Island. By ARTHUR GASK. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

The Borgia Cabinet. By J. S. FLETCHER. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

Fay of the Circus. By A. A. THOMSON. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

Ashby's Downfall. By DUNCAN GRINNELL-MILNE. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

Gulfs. By NOEL CRAIG. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

Silver Gilt. By CHRISTOPHER NOEL. Jenkins. 7s. 6d.

The detective story is the modern counterpart of the stage melodrama of the 'eighties. Virtue triumphs, after the reader has had a good run for his money with Vice; the storm rattles over the moors or along the ancestral corridor: the hero is still a Gentleman, a cool Pimpernel, though he is now a detective instead of a lover; as a pattern, the crossword perhaps has replaced the bouquet of lilies: but how much of it is still the same! The curtain goes up on Mr. Gask's *The House of the Island* with eleven murders already in hand; murders, like betrayals, occur afterwards at crucial moments; Scotland Yard provides a troop of good-natured buffoons at whom the reader can comfortably laugh; the criminals are as black-dyed and insouciant as villians ever were. And it goes with a swing! Mr. Gask very soon discloses the identity of the gang of murderers, but keeps the traditional atmosphere of suspense and mystery. His hero-detective, with a touch of daring, comes from Australia, but can disguise himself by mere control of the facial muscles, and we feel safe in his hands, even when he is caught by the gang of criminals who know the rules of the game and decide not to kill him at once but to keep him alive a little longer, so providing for his escape and their eventual capture. Mr. Fletcher is more a specialist, who exploits particularly the sang-froid of the criminal character and the tigerishness of women in general (there are more women than usual in *The Borgia Cabinet*), and thus baffles the reader in a world openly defying the police. His detective walks in quietly, notes all the obvious things, and putting them together finds the solution. The other four books on the list are not detective stories but novels with a love story and local colour. *Fay of the Circus* is good circus, with an orphan brought up on the tight-rope, a genial Dickensian circus-master and of course the fairy horse-rider. It is workmanlike with the right ingredients of romance and comedy, and is pleasantly written. Cairo, Palestine and the Air Service provide Mr. Grinnell-Milne with the chance of describing the bar at Shepherd's, the desert, and a fatal entanglement between an Air Force officer and a lady of the *demi-monde* who smokes opium and has "her Bey" in the background. *Gulfs* is too much local colour; it begins in America and pullmans over Europe—a Europe with all the fittings, knowingly labelled. *Silver Gilt* describes the day-dreams of shop-assistants, but there is more than a touch of snobbery in mimicking their accents. In this class of fiction, detective stories would seem to be the safest (they have a recognised pattern and do not tempt the author to draw from his own life) and as a rule the best.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Life of Daniel Defoe: Bicentenary Edition. By THOMAS WRIGHT. Farncombe. 21s.

Everyone deeply interested in Defoe has consulted the first edition of this book published in 1894. Its veteran author now tells us that he has almost entirely rewritten it, so much new information respecting Defoe having come to light in recent years. The first edition is therefore superseded; and Defoe's admirers will replace it by the present one, which abounds with illustrations, maps and plans. Friends of the old edition will know what to expect from the new one—that is, much well-arranged information, and, also, much speculative matter of exceedingly dubious value. Mr. Wright's conception of Defoe the man, does credit, we very much fear, to his heart only; but it may be admitted, so little being known about the man, that each of us is entitled to his own opinion. That Defoe was a writer of extraordinary genius all must agree, for his slightest work, and not least his own letters, is touched with rare quality; but he was only once to write a novel of universal appeal—*Robinson Crusoe*. Its very title to us all is magical. One English critic has received recently from the Continent about a hundred press cuttings—articles written on the occasion of Defoe bicentenary. Not one of these mentions any work of Defoe but *Crusoe*; and yet he might never have written a novel at all had he not been inspired by a French novelist—the author of the *Mémoires de Artagnan*—Gatien de Courtilz. That Mr. Wright

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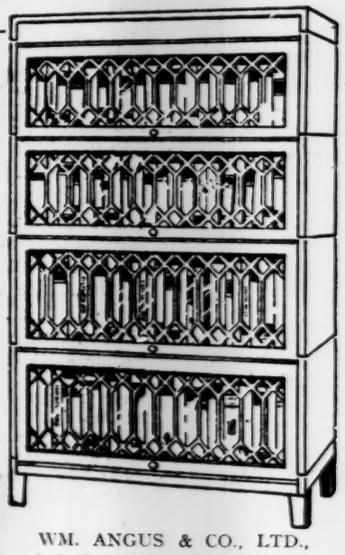

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should be absolutely silent respecting this French writer is not so extraordinary as that contemporary foreign critics should be oblivious of the great Englishman's indebtedness to a novelist whose works at one time swarmed in the book-shops and were the prey of translators.

Sangoree. By HUGH EDWARDS. Cape. 7s. 6d.

Sangoree is an exercise in style. Mr. Hugh Edwards writes with a fine, almost mincing, precision, sentences whose construction is more French than English, in which the meaning is hidden as much in the sound and colour of the words as in the sense. It is a prose which should be sipped and tasted, not drained at a gulp. The story, of the adventures of William de Loret, a young Irishman seeking his fortune in the West Indies and America, in so far as it is fiction, is immaterial, and de Loret himself, lucidly as he is revealed, remains withdrawn, the contemplative stranger we meet on the first page, when "a dream —a mood that was becoming habitual—had captured the heart and rapt the mind into a vanished day." But as a book of travel *Sangoree* excels. The early nineteenth-century tropic scene is admirably and conclusively conveyed to the mind, as well as to the ear and eye. Not only foreign sounds and smells, but alien, almost forgotten, habits of thought and speech become living and real. Mr. Edwards tells us much, both of places and persons, that is rich and strange. *Sangoree* is a book which, nearly precious in its conception and execution, will necessarily appeal to the few not the many, but those who discover it will find it both stimulating and memorable.

Born Old Died Young. By INEZ HOLDEN. Duckworth. 7s. 6d.

Miss Holden writes of "the Great World of 1940 which is like that of 1932, but more so"—more fatuous, more self-seeking, more dreary—if there is anything of value in the "Great World of 1932," it has evidently been lost long before 1940. But then this world of magnates, rich hostesses, harlots and rejuvenation will scarcely seem like a real world of any period in history to considerable numbers of the community. *Born Old Died Young* seems to be a strained and feeble imitation of Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*, but where Mr. Waugh is witty Miss Holden only succeeds in being facetious, where he is subtle, she is crude. Mr. Waugh at his most extravagant is still in touch with this "real world," but *Born Old Died Young* has no relation to it. Arnold, the young man born old, and Virginia, "the girl with a blank mind and a dead heart," fail to arouse any emotion but irritation in the reader. As for the other characters, it is a relief when the giant airship in which they are travelling home from America crashes in mid-Atlantic, with total loss of life.

Green Bondage. By FRANCES OGILVIE. Ivor Nicholson and Watson. 7s. 6d.

Nowadays, when story-telling has become a refined fine art and comprises so much that is eclectic and exotic to its natural growth, the ability of the writer to hold the attention of the reader no longer appears to be a first principle. It is therefore, all the more invigorating to pick up a book which, without any eccentricities of style or matter, yet succeeds in claiming the closest attention from the first page to the last. In *Green Bondage*, Miss Frances Ogilvie tells the story of the struggle between man and the earth on the tobacco farms of Kentucky, and answers the question "What hath man of all his labour?" with passionate knowledge. The style, which at the beginning is inclined to jerkiness, grows in simplicity and force with the book. The characters are movingly, even heart-rendingly real, and the story is alive with the excitement which is born of suspense. Various romantic novels dealing with the rugged emotions of farm-labourers and fishermen have been widely acclaimed recently, but in *Green Bondage* there is no romanticising, and if some of the refinements of story-telling are missing, there are vigour and knowledge which more than compensate for all the absent arts and graces.

Chadwick Roundabouts. By ALEC BROWN. Cape. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Alec Brown is a writer of acute psychological insight, and this gift enables him to make of the novel of crime something refreshingly new. He traces with amazing ingenuity the events which, as the result of accident, coincidence and suspicion, finally lead to the trial of an innocent man for the murder of the village tabby. The *pièce de résistance* is the detailed description of the functioning of a local jury. The reader, given an inside view of all the circumstances of the crime, the emotions of the criminal and of everybody else connected in any way with it, finds that he himself is also in it up to the hilt, and is quite unable to fall back on the detached feeling of vague surprise which the ordinary crime novel arouses in him. It is not unnatural, therefore, that he should feel a personal disappointment in Jimmy Wingfield, the chief character, who becomes, half-way through the story, a much less curious and interesting person than he promises to be at the beginning. *Chadwick Roundabouts* is, however, undoubtedly the best book Mr. Alec Brown has yet written, and shows a tremendous increase of power in the presentation both of plot and character. His style also, which in *Green Lane* was often over-elaborate and over-scientific, has gained in clarity and force.

7 O'CLOCK . . . Brrr! what a morning . . . cold and raw with a bit of rain in the air . . . Oooh! I'm tired . . . rotten night last night . . . hardly slept a wink . . . it was a hard day at the office yesterday too . . . nothing went right. . . . Ahhh! that's better. . . . What a difference a drop of hot water makes. . . . Now for a shave . . . thank goodness I remembered the Parke-Davis Shaving Cream. Wonderful stuff! It stops the raw skin that I used to get after a shave. . . . Umm! There's certainly something in it that makes the razor go easy . . . That's better.

Now for some breakfast and a hard day at the office . . . what a wonderful morning it is . . . just a nice nip in the air to make you lively . . . it's good to be alive.

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About Motoring

THE CHRYSLER PLYMOUTH

IT is not very likely that many British motorists will buy the 1932 Chrysler Plymouth for home use. In the United States it ranks as an ultra-cheap car, and sells against the Ford and Chevrolet, for its American price is equivalent to £125 in English money. But it is listed on our market at £290, thanks to tariff and exchange and ocean freight. This figure makes it considerably more expensive than many British cars which are at least equally attractive in their general appeal. But it embodies a novel item of design which is worth all the attention motorists can bestow upon it. The car is equipped with a large four cylinder engine of the mass-production type; but by dint of a special mounting this naturally coarse power unit is transfigured into the semblance of an unusually pleasant six-cylinder. Engine mountings differ appreciably in design. Some engines are bolted down as rigidly as possible. Others are mounted on rubber buffers. The new Chrysler engine is carried on two trunnions, one high up at the front, and the other low down at the rear, so that the suspension axis is diagonal in the vertical plane. Both mountings are cushioned by rubber, and the power unit is steadied by a transverse leaf spring. If the bonnet is opened, and the starting switch is pressed, the whole engine jumps visibly under the thrust of the starting motor. When the engine starts, it wobbles gently but perceptibly; as it is accelerated, it steadies down until practically the last atom of vibration is absorbed in this peculiar flexible mounting.

The ordinary motorist will probably retort that his car does not vibrate. This may be true if he owns an expensive vehicle. But in producing a cheap six-cylinder it is seldom possible to balance all the engine components with precision, to machine every combustion chamber exactly to the same capacity, or to include a crankshaft damper. Moreover, if all these attentions are bestowed by the manufacturer, small negligences disturb the perfect balance in prolonged use. Air leaks originate at valve seatings and engine joints; tappet clearances vary, and are imperfectly re-set; and the balance which was carefully

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TRAVEL IN SOVIET RUSSIA

secured at the works is not maintained by the owner. With a four-cylinder of the ordinary type no such superb balancing is possible. Lack of balance betrays itself in all sorts of sympathetic vibrations when the engine is running. I spent several hours curing some of them on my own car last week, although it is a six-cylinder of far higher cost than this cheap Chrysler. One of them was traced to a dashboard panel, three more to loosely fitting window panes; another to lack of padding in the fire extinguisher brackets; and so on. Each of these produced an obnoxious rattle or drum when the engine was running with the car stationary. Two of them proved especially responsive at set engine speeds with the car in motion. All of them were irritating to a fastidious owner. They are usually difficult to diagnose, and occasionally difficult to cure when traced; remedy is especially awkward when the vibration attacks a pane of glass. With the Chrysler type of engine mounting this nuisance is decidedly alleviated, if not wholly eliminated. The flexible mounting really converts the engine into a sponge capable of absorbing its own vibrations.

In other respects the new Chrysler design is distinctly advanced for a best seller catalogued at rockbottom price; and if it could be built in these islands at an efficient factory, it would eat into our home markets most corrosively. For example, it is equipped with an unusually attractive freewheel, so designed that it confers most of the advantages of our own Wilson preselector gear. If the car is slowing down on top prior to a traffic block, the driver can engage bottom or second gear in complete silence without so much as touching his clutch pedal. The "overrun" created when the car is driving the engine is emphatically noisy on all ordinary cheap cars, and on some which are not cheap; with the freewheel in action this car slides like a Rolls. The brakes are fully equal to the average European standard, and rouse no qualms whatsoever about stopping power when the use of the engine for braking is jettisoned by the freewheel.

I am not theoretically an enthusiast for the American form of automatic ignition control. This is worked by the inlet pipe depression, exactly in the manner of the familiar screenwipers. This system operates excellently except when the car is pulling heavily on a hill with the throttle wide open. Under these conditions a slightly retarded ignition is ideal, but the device will advance the spark to the full. However, it may teach American drivers to use their gearboxes sympathetically.

The exhaust of the car is unduly noisy, which is a double pity as the mechanical silence is remarkable for so cheap a vehicle. The designer will probably attend to this fault in due course. His exhaust system is possibly something of an afterthought, as the free movement of the engine naturally prohibits the usual rigid mounting of the exhaust pipe, which is anchored at the far end and is free to wobble a little in sympathy with the engine mounting.

In speed and climb and fuel economy the car corresponds to its type. Rated at a £16 tax in this country, it is capable of approximately 65 m.p.h. It has only three speeds, but second is quite useful, and high road speeds on the lower gears are quiet and smooth enough. The contours are good, and the standard saloon is of the typical cheap American type, a bluff, squareish vertical body, without any luggage locker. In the United States it undoubtedly represents extraordinary value, and probably deserves to rank as the best and most interesting cheap car ever produced. It must be perturbing the boardrooms of the Ford and Chevrolet concerns, and it would hardly be surprising if it were presently built in several factories inside the European tariff walls. It has a year's start of its principal rivals in its own field, and there is nothing in its engine mounting which cannot be evaded by alternative methods of securing the same beautifully smooth effects. Perhaps its main result will be to provoke Ford and the others to apply similar engine suspension to six cylinders.

I am interested in it because the modern owner's principal preoccupation with any cheap new car is to keep body noises under control. Some of these irritating body noises arise from bad fitting and others from rapid wear. But these casual noises are comparatively simple to cure. It is a far more difficult matter to cope with the innumerable noises which are due to sympathetic vibrations; and most of these seem to be curbed at their source by the Chrysler invention. A comparison of this car with my own suggests that if my engine were so mounted, I should have had no tinkering to do for the first 5,000 miles, whereas during that period I was perpetually wrestling with these petty nuisances.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

Playtime

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

No. 3.—MANSFIELD PARK

I am indebted for this problem to a correspondent.

Towards the end of September in the year 1808 (according to Mr. R. W. Chapman) the young Bertrams gave an impromptu dance at Mansfield Park, "they thought only of the afternoon, built on the late acquisition of a violin player in the servants' hall, and the possibility of raising five couples with the help of Mrs. Grant and a new intimate friend of Mr. Bertram's just arrived on a visit." The Bertrams being a somewhat formal family, the etiquette of the ballroom was observed, which laid down the three following rules: (1) That the host and hostess must dance the first dance with their most important guests. (2) That no couple must dance together twice *successively*, although they might dance together several times in the course of the evening. (3) That brothers and sisters must not dance together.

The family was Tom (eldest son), Maria (eldest daughter), Edmund and Julia Bertram, and their cousin Fanny Price who lived with them; their guests were Mrs. Grant with Henry and Mary Crawford (her unmarried brother and sister), Mr. Yates, and Mr. Rushworth, who was engaged to Maria Bertram.

In the first dance Maria Bertram danced with Mr. Rushworth.

In the second dance Fanny Price danced with Edmund Bertram.

In the third dance there were the following partners: Mrs. Grant and Mr. Yates, Maria Bertram and Mr. Rushworth, Julia Bertram and Henry Crawford, Fanny Price and Tom Bertram.

Who were partners in the first two dances?

REPORT ON PROBLEM 1
SLOCOMBE'S BANK

The response to the contest has been a good deal heavier than I anticipated. One hundred and sixty-six competitors have ascertained that it was Larkins who presented the forged cheque at the Bank.

Some have worked out the answer in a few lines; others have taken up to three pages of foolscap. I prefer concise solutions.

The following is the answer to the Slocombe's Bank problem:

Pickler is eliminated at once, since if he is guilty two of his statements are untrue. This is confirmed by the fact that yet a third statement ("I remember speaking to Dubb") is inconsistent with the innocence of both Dubb and Larkins.

Dubb also is eliminated, since if he is guilty he is "not in any need of money" and thus two of Larkins' statements are false.

This only leaves Larkins, whose guilt is consistent with all the data. The three false statements are:

"I remember speaking to Dubb" (Pickler).
"I was not in the Bank on Thursday" (Larkins).
"I am not in any need of money" (Dubb).

Correct solutions from:—
Dr. L. C. Adam, J. Ainslie, R. P. A., Arlyn, Asquitha, M. S. Amos, Agitat, F. G. Adamson.
G. F. Boultbee, G. S. Bagenal, M. Besly, J. Bailey, D. Barber, Blind Mole, J. Ball, J. Bourne, S. L. Butler, Bernard, B. Brewster, J. H. Boll, A. L. Bulley, Dr. C. O. S. B. Brooke.
D. M. Cheke, J. B. Channon, A. Classe, H. L. Cox, A. Crokingburn, A. H. Coombe-Tennant, Cooper, R. M. Crosskey, Crooked Dean, A. S. Collard, L. C. Clarke, P. K. Couch, G. B. Courtier, E. Cohen, Christopher, T. W. Chaundy.
C. Dinwoodie, Didymus, C. M. Douglas, V. J. D.
Euclidean, Elemel, Mrs. H. Ensor.
E. C. Fieller, P. M. F., E. M. Firth, Major Fletcher, F. J. Forty.
G. E. Goodman, G. Goodall, W. M. G., F. B. Gibbins, E. C. I. Garner, D. Galbraith, Verdant Green.
A. E. G. Hawkins, W. P. Hudson, Dr. F. Heinig, N. Hartley, L. A. Harvey, E. L. Hudson.
G. H. Ince, Initio, A. J., F. E. James, Jaques, F. L. Jones, A. A. Jones.
H. Kettle, A. Keith, P. K.
B. L. Lewis, W. A. Lynch, A. C. Lynch.
R. M. G. MacDonald, H. Mayes, H. Moore, D. J. Mielziner, Mellstock, Mrs. J. Murray, C. M. Morrison, Morcol, W. B. M., S. Miles, R. H. Millward, J. P. McEvoy, J. M. Morrison, F. S. M., Mensana, F. Morrell, G. P. Meredith, Mercutio, Macbeth, Dr. Mintzman, F. E. Maitland.
W. B. Owen, W. Oldham, Orion, W. O'Dea.
K. Povey, C. M. Perry, S. O. Pike, J. Procter, Mrs. Ponsonby, J. Poole, J. L. Priston, W. Pearson, G. C. Potter, E. Phillips.
P. M. Rose, L. Ramsey, Rigel, Racketeer, W. J. Rasbridge, J. A. Roberts, M. Rose, S. D. Rugen, L. R., J. Ross, Remaur, G. G. Robb, L. G. Roussin.
S. T. S., F. P. Streeten, Silex, Samva, F. L. Snow, D. G. Sopwith, J. R. Speirs, M. G. Sims, L. M. Sandison, W. A. Sledge, Sciss, G. Sharp, Sycorax, E. R. Scott, P. Seney, A. J. Starr.
Thoriger, W. S. Tracey, Tom, A. S. Tennant, W. G. Thomlinson, E. Taylor, H. G. Taylor, J. Tutin, J. Todd, R. C. Taylor.
Henry Vine, H. Vallance, K. D. Vernon.
G. Wellard, W. Ward, B. Willis, W. A. Whitehouse, D. Wildman, S. F. Williams, J. R. Whitehouse, Vic Waldron, D. M. Watson, C. H. Waddington, C. H. M. Wilcox, S. W. Zylo.

CROSSWORDS.

A number of readers inquire indignantly what has happened to Trinculo's Crossword. It has been discontinued (temporarily, I hope) solely for considerations of space. The "G. B. S." solution (unfortunately crowded out) will be given at the first opportunity.

Competitors for the Quarterly Prize are reminded that solutions (on **foolscap**, and with names and addresses clearly shown) must reach this office, addressed to *Caliban*, not later than midday on the following Thursday. Consideration, however, will be given to competitors residing abroad; every effort will be made to enable them to participate.

CALIBAN.

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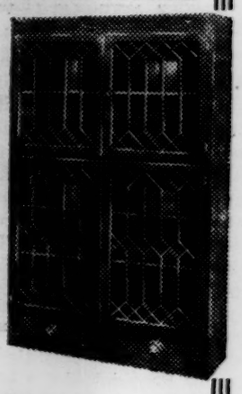
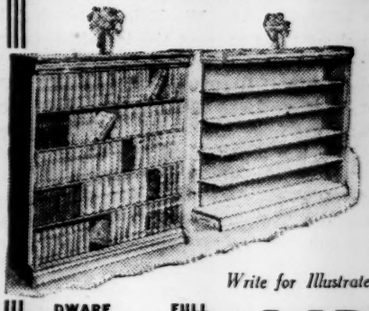
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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BY TOREADOR

KREUGER AFTERMATH—WANTED: QUARTERLY ACCOUNTS—RUBBER GOING NATIVE?

IT must be very irritating for the Communist to watch the capitalist system receiving deadly blow after blow and yet surviving it all. Capitalists may shoot themselves but the system lives on. Of course, the Communists may argue that time is on their side and that sooner or later there will be a mis-fire and the system will fall dead as well as the capitalist. I am half afraid that this may have happened with the shot that Ivar Kreuger fired. We have not yet felt all the repercussions of that terrible tragedy. The honesty of the great financier—which I for one had never for a moment doubted—has been impugned and almost every day some new disclosure of an ugly and embarrassing nature is being made. Kreuger's ideas were so sound, his methods so businesslike, and his activities so vast that banking facilities had been opened up for his group in every financial centre of the world. We know now that he had to borrow heavily on short-term to meet the instalments due on the Polish and German loans last year as well as to pay the Kreuger and Toll and Swedish Match 1930 final dividends. We are now told that to obtain these banking credits the balance-sheets of Kreuger and Toll were falsified and that the best assets of Swedish Match (including the shares held in British Match) and of International Match were pledged as collateral. Thus, the future of Swedish Match appears to be as hopelessly mortgaged as that of Kreuger and Toll. The story is now current that the Ericsson Telephone accounts presented to certain New York bankers as the basis for the exchange of shares with International Telephone were found to be at variance with the facts, that the Ericsson-International Telephone deal was "called off" and that Kreuger was called upon to repay the amounts spent (believed to be $10 millions) by the International Telephone bankers in making the exchange of shares. Whether the repayment was actually made by fresh borrowings in New York or was to have been completed in Paris is not divulged, but it is plain that the wretched financier received sentence of death in the courtrooms of New York bankers. That last voyage across the Atlantic must have been hell.

* * *

The well-known Swedish, Swiss, French and American banks which were deeply involved in Kreuger credits will doubtless receive help from their Governments or their "trade unions"—it would be too serious to let any one of them confess insolvency—but what of the unfortunate private investors? Are they to lose their millions without a finger being stirred to protect their interests in future? I am well aware that committees are being formed to represent shareholders and debenture-holders at the funeral rites of the Kreuger companies, but I am concerned about the future of investment as a whole. To prevent worse scandals arising than the Kreuger or Kylsant cases, it is imperative for the Stock Exchange Committee to enact a new rule—that an official quotation will only be granted to companies publishing quarterly accounts. And in the case of holding companies the accounts must be "consolidated," embracing all the activities of the subsidiaries. That there is no practical difficulty is proved by the fact that the leading industrial corporations of America have long produced quarterly trading accounts and balance-sheets—and have done so voluntarily. Not only does this practice enable investors to keep up to date with their company news, but it induces directors to recognise facts—to write off losses or write down depreciated assets each quarter. If huge companies like the Royal Mail and Swedish Match had been compelled to produce quarterly accounts, the shareholders would never have been so long deceived. The twelve months' official silence which follows upon the publication of a company's report is one of the worst features of British company administration. It has always stultified intelligent investment, and now we know that it has encouraged crime.

* * *

It is sad to find even the most enlightened companies accepting and indulging in this national custom of playing hide and seek with shareholders. Take for example the Ford Motor Company. It is true that investors in this country are not greatly interested in the British Ford, for they had the sense to sell back to America at inflated prices (up to £4¾) the bulk of the 2,800,000 shares which were issued here in December 1928 (present price 20s. 6d.). In fact only 3 per cent. of the share capital of the British Ford Motor is now held in Great Britain. But this does not excuse the directors keeping their shareholders in complete ignorance of the results of trading from March, 1931, until March, 1932, especially as the profits (disregarding the profits of foreign subsidiary companies) dropped in this period from £1,054,285 to £412,142. The same criticism may be passed on the Royal Dutch and Shell Transport group. These are holding companies, and as the annual accounts never disclose the real earnings of their subsidiaries, quarterly accounts on the same uninformative basis would not greatly add to the enlightenment of shareholders. But this is the month of April, with the green shooting on the trees, and conditions ruling in the oil trade to-day are already different from conditions ruling at the end of last year, and vastly different from those of May, 1931. Yet the shareholders have seen no figures beyond the figures of December, 1930. The bald announcement by the directors last November that an interim dividend would not be paid because conditions in the oil industry were so unsettled has been the only indication that results for 1931 will be unfavourable. As a matter of fact it is virtually impossible to make a profit on the production, refining and marketing of oil to-day, and if the market had seen quarterly accounts it could hardly have run the £1 shares of Shell up to 2½ as it did recently. Investing in the dark can only lead to undesirable speculation which does the Stock Exchange and the country no good.

* * *

The worst American film I have ever seen was entitled "Let's Go Native." This appears to be the slogan of the rubber industry. All attempts at official restriction have now been abandoned by the British and Dutch Governments on the grounds of "the impossibility of framing and operating an international scheme which would guarantee the effective regulation of the production or export of rubber." The inference is that the Dutch Government was unable to satisfy itself or the British Government that it could effectively control native output in the Dutch East Indies. The price of rubber is now 1 15/16d. per lb. as compared with 4⅛d. at the beginning of 1931 and 7½d. at the beginning of 1930. It is obvious that no European grower can produce rubber at a profit at the present level of prices. Many European estates will close down immediately; others will carry on until their financial resources have been exhausted. A few, belonging to the financially strong groups, may decide to go ahead with a full output in order to secure the lowest level of production costs. It will be a desperate fight, for there is no prospect, with world stocks at 650,000 tons approximating a year's world absorption, of an early recovery in prices. Indeed, automobile manufacturers are loaded up with stocks of crude rubber bought for a trade which has dwindled away. The other day, on making a forced stop at a garage on the Great West Road, I observed stacks of cases which turned out to be crude rubber stored by a leading American tyre manufacturer whose factory was not far distant. This, I was informed, was rubber purchased at over 7d. per lb., and the reason why it was stored in this garage was because the factory itself was already choked with surplus stock of crude rubber. If this is typical of the tyre manufacturing industry, the outlook for rubber producers is not promising. It is true that the British growers have largely themselves to blame for endeavouring to operate in small uneconomic units, with overhead charges ridiculously out of proportion to the turnover. If the investor were to look up in the reference books the rubber companies beginning, say, with the name "Bukit" and observe the London charges and directors' fees, he would be amazed at the extravagance of this form of individualistic enterprise. Bukit Rajah, for example, produced £20,000 worth of rubber in 1930–31 and had estate expenses of £25,000 and London charges and directors' fees of £2,800. This is not an extreme case. Certainly it was wise not to introduce official restriction to bolster up this uneconomic form of production. Unfortunately, the elimination of the high-cost producers will inflict further losses on the British investors who are still carrying the shares which marked their intemperance in the last rubber boom.

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COMPANY MEETING

NORWICH UNION LIFE INSURANCE SOCIETY

A SAFE AND STABLE INVESTMENT

The 124th annual general meeting of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society was held on April 12th at Norwich.

Mr. Michael Falcon (the President) said that the net premium income of the Life Insurance account was £3,492,402, and included £507,180 received by way of new premiums on policies effected during the year. The total exceeded the premiums of the previous year by £188,252. The new life insurance written was £8,249,645, an increase of £216,011, or 2.7 per cent. The insurances in force at the end of the year totalled £99,053,837, and showed an increase on the amount outstanding at the beginning of the year of £6,532,814.

The mortality experience for the year worked out at 70 per cent. of the expected. This compared with 61 per cent. in 1930 and an average rate of 65 per cent. over the last five years. The net income from investments amounted to £1,648,563, an increase of £53,466, and showed a net return, after payment of income tax, of £4 17s. 5d., before making provision for depreciation. It had been thought best to write out of the accounts the depreciation on Stock Exchange securities as at 31st December last at a cost of £1,098,746, even although as much as £600,000 of appreciation had taken place on a revaluation as at 31st March. The Society had £11,600,000 mortgages in and outside the United Kingdom. These were all revised carefully by the Directors at the end of December, 1930, and, as showing how satisfactory they were, the interest, dividends, and rents outstanding in the balance-sheet, amounting to £95,028, had all been received with the exception of £2,300.

There was sufficient margin over the valuation of the liabilities to indicate that, after writing off the depreciation, bonuses at the same rates as those declared at the quinquennium could be made out of surplus, retaining all the strength of the 2½ p.c. valuation on the Society's whole life and endowment assurance contracts. To make sure of this, a valuation of the whole of the Society's liabilities was made as at 31st December last, which confirmed the strong financial position in which the Society found itself. The interest rate at £4 19s. per cent., after allowing for the write-off, gave a margin of £2 9s. over the valuation rate, and was an important aid in the maintenance of bonuses. Here, then, they had a combination ensuring the stability of this great office, and, therefore, its policyholders could look forward to the future with the utmost confidence. The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

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COMPANY MEETING.

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, LIMITED.

SATISFACTORY YEAR'S TRADING DESPITE CONDITIONS.

BRIGHTER OUTLOOK.

SIR HARRY McGOWAN'S REVIEW.

The fifth annual general meeting of Imperial Chemical Industries, Limited, was held on Thursday at Central Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.

Sir Harry McGowan, K.B.E. (the Chairman), said that during 1931 industry had been little more than the plaything of political and financial conditions. These had got steadily worse, till they culminated in Great Britain's abandonment of the Gold Standard last September, a step which had removed the special handicap under which British industry had been labouring since 1925. The year's trading of I.C.I. had exceeded expectations. That the Company had been able to show a gross income before depreciation of only £461,072 less than in 1930 was ground for real satisfaction.

The expression "gross profit for the year" hitherto used in the profit and loss account had been altered so as to describe the Company's sources of income and to make it clearer that the dividends of the principal subsidiaries were paid before providing for their depreciation of buildings and plant. The Central Obsolescence and Depreciation Fund existed for that purpose. The total disposable income for the year amounted to £5,322,168, out of which, after appropriations for Central Obsolescence and income tax, £4,061,773 was left for dividend purposes. Payment of the Preference and Ordinary dividends amounted to £3,544,948, leaving a carry forward of £516,825, which was £136,658 less than in the previous year. It was felt that that small encroachment was justified. The amount placed to Central Obsolescence—£1,000,000—was double that so allocated last year, since it was essential to have a strong obsolescence fund in order continually to keep pace with the improvements in plant and machinery brought about by the advance of knowledge.

The only comment he wished to make on the profit and loss account was that the income for the year contained nothing of an exceptional nature, and related solely to the year's operations. It included neither profit arising from the sale of investments, nor any transfers from reserve funds accumulated in past years, and it was arrived at after making full provision for the reduced value of all stocks of materials, stores, and finished products.

As in previous years, the dividends from the wholly owned subsidiary companies represented their full profits, subject to the statement under the Companies Act, 1929, printed at the end of the Annual Report

It might be a matter of interest to the shareholders to know that their own auditors, Messrs. Thomson McLintock & Company and Messrs. Price, Waterhouse & Company, were also the auditors of the majority of their principal subsidiary companies. The accounts for the remainder were dealt with by Messrs. Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Company, of London, and Messrs. Edmund D. White & Sons, of Liverpool. Naturally, the Company's own auditors had full access to the accounts dealt with by the two latter firms.

With unimportant exceptions the accounts of the home subsidiary companies were made up to the uniform date of the 31st December and those of the foreign subsidiary companies to the 30th September. In the latter case the earlier date enabled the accounts to be received from overseas in time for scrutiny by the Company's auditors.

The Directors' report for 1931 gave the shareholders particulars of the movements of the volume of trade during that year as regarded their principal products. No other explanation of the decreases was needed than the general condition of world affairs, of which the daily Press provided ample detail. No industrial enterprise to-day, however wide its ramifications, however skilful its management, or however efficient its staff and workers, could hope completely to escape from the over-riding effects of the semi-paralysis of international trade, the chaos of monetary conditions, and the unrelenting pressure of a continuous fall in prices.

The balance sheet showed that £1,837,596 had been written off the shares and debentures in and advances to subsidiary companies. The Company had adhered to their policy of concentrating manufacture where most advantageous, and had closed down certain plants. That did not lead to a reduction in earning power, but tended to increase it. As a result of enquiry at Billingham it had been decided to write off a number of specific items which in the light of improved methods did not justify the value at which they stood in the books. To provide for that writing down, £2,000,000 had been taken from general reserve, which was thereby reduced to £10,725,000, Central Obsolescence Fund being increased from £4,500,000 to £5,662,404. Nothing had been added to the general reserve out of the year's profits because a year of extreme depression was not the time to increase reserves which were already powerful.

They had continued the policy of 1930 of carrying their marketable and other investments at their book value. A time of world financial crisis defied any attempt to decide what was a reasonable normal value of an investment. The note on the balance sheet stated that at the 31st December, 1931, the market or computed value of their marketable and other investments showed a depreciation of £3,346,565 on book value. That represented a fall in value during 1931 of £623,200. When conditions were more stable, it might be necessary to review the book value of that asset. In the meantime, even on the lower values of to-day, the general reserve amply covered the depreciation.

The shares and debentures in and advances to subsidiary companies shown in the balance sheet at £69,264,978, represented in the main the Company's holdings in the eight manufacturing groups referred to in the report, namely, alkali, general chemical, explosives, fertiliser and synthetic products, dyestuffs, leathercloth, lime and metals. The shares and debentures in associated companies standing in the balance sheet at £6,522,062, represented in the main their investments in African Explosives & Industries, Ltd., Canadian Industries, Ltd., and a number of smaller Dominion and foreign companies engaged in industrial activities cognate to their own. The marketable and other investments standing at £9,540,677 represented investments in large industrial companies with which they had, directly or indirectly, trade connections. The main items were investments in the General Motors Corporation, Du Pont & Co., and the Allied Chemical Company, in the United States; the International Nickel Company in Canada, the I.G. Farbenindustrie in Germany, and Joseph Lucas & Sons in this country.

The only other item on the balance sheet upon which he need comment was the amount of cash at bankers and in hand. It showed an increase over the amount at the end of 1930 of £1,294,524, and now stood at £4,222,900. They had, therefore, ample liquid resources for a long time to come. To some extent, the growth in cash arose from the policy of strict economy they had steadily pursued throughout the whole organisation during the year, including a continuous scrutiny of the volume of stocks. For the rest, it represented normal accumulation of profits in cash, which had been conserved by a rigid control over capital expenditure. Since the 31st December, 1931, they had invested a substantial sum out of that cash in British Government securities.

He was naturally gratified at the change in the fiscal policy of the country. There would be difficulties to be overcome and some temporary uncertainty as to the readjustments of trade which would follow the change. I.C.I. were in an advantageous position for two reasons. First, most of their raw materials were home-produced. Secondly, they stood to be little affected by retaliatory measures.

He believed that the new trade opportunities presented by a tariff could only be utilised satisfactorily through more closely knit industrial entities, welding into one body existing competitive units. I.C.I. was to-day regarded in many countries as the British prototype of large-scale business, but doubts had recently been expressed about the soundness and permanence of such concerns. Those sprang from a few striking failures. It was an elementary fallacy to assume that what was true in one or two instances must be true in general. Specific failures did not invalidate the soundness of a principle. I.C.I. was as free as it could be made from the defects which elsewhere had led to trouble. To begin with, members of the Company's board had been freed from definite executive duties so as to be able to give attention to new problems as they arose. They were daily in touch with one another. Their policy was hammered out in friendly discussion.

Their principal subsidiary companies in the United Kingdom were organised in eight groups, the names of which were given in the Annual Report. Every group contained a number of separate companies, the products of which were cognate to each other. For all

(*Continued on page* 511.)

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, LIMITED.

(Continued from page 510.)

purposes of control and administration they treated the companies that formed one group as a unit. The statutory Board of each of those companies was the parent company, viz., Imperial Chemical Industries, so that there was a uniform legal controlling authority vested in their own Board. That method of control ensured harmonious working and co-ordinated direction over the whole wide field of the Company's activities. Group or company inter-competition was avoided, there was no conflict of authority, and wasteful duplication was eliminated. Each group had a subordinate Board, which was in reality the Group Executive, consisting entirely of members of their staff, some attached to the companies within the group, and the remainder to head office; none of the Company's directors acted in that capacity. All technical, commercial, financial and administrative problems concerning one group were therefore studied in the first place as affecting one entity, although in putting decisions into effect they naturally complied with any obligations arising out of the separate legal existence of each company. The necessary co-ordinating link between himself and his full-time colleagues on their General Purposes Committee and the various Group Executives was provided by an intermediate body which the directors called the Central Administration Committee. It was composed of the Group Chairmen and a number of their headquarters' senior officers, and was presided over by one of his own colleagues. Through that machinery they secured both devolution of responsibility and a free channel of communication from the factories right up to the Chairman and the Board. Devolution encouraged decision and self-reliance. Free communication permitted of orderly reference on points of policy and rapid execution of decision. Some people asked whether so large an organisation could be efficiently managed without losing elasticity and initiative. The Company's system fostered and preserved those qualities. Apart from new policies and activities instituted by their own Board, much of their management lay in harmonising the impulses for action which continually welled up from below. Their ideal was a thoroughly dovetailed executive staff, well-balanced, self-supporting, with a clearly defined policy, so that its full power should not be impaired or even shaken by the loss of any one individual.

This scheme of control had been used for the continuous study of internal economies, in which the centralised service departments at Millbank had played a large part. The Company had steadily aimed at concentrating manufacture by fresh capital expenditure at the most appropriate point, as well as by the transference of business. Some factories also had been sold, some demolished, and some held for fresh developments. That physical rationalisation was not yet complete.

On the side of financial rationalisation the Company had early achieved a large measure of uniformity, but much remained to be done in eliminating disadvantages arising from the separate existence of different companies. Steps were being gradually taken to reduce the number of those, one of which was the registration last week of I.C.I. (Explosives), Ltd. Companies which had already been dispensed with had been liquidated after their assets and business had been transferred elsewhere in the Group. The liquidation of an I.C.I. company was not due to failure. He wanted to make that clear. Liquidation of any of their subsidiary companies represented not a tale of disaster, but a mark of progress in the work of financial rationalisation. In the future there would be more of them, but care would be taken to see that the goodwill of their names should be preserved.

The administrative policy had to be thanked for the progress made in wage and salary adjustments, which had been achieved without friction. The fact that wage reductions were accepted in a spirit of goodwill was a tribute both to the workers and to the Company's labour policy. In addition to economies so effected, the most careful scrutiny had been made of every class of expenditure, and all outlays not judged sufficiently remunerative or promising eliminated.

He unhesitatingly endorsed the view of the Macmillan Committee that British technical efficiency was not inferior to that of its competitors. A large measure of the success of I.C.I. rested upon that factor, much of which was attributable to research, which was an integral part of the Company's industrial practice. The price to be paid for maintaining a position in the forefront of the world's industry was a heavy one, but was a necessary component of the Company's normal manufacturing costs.

New Products

The fruits of a policy of rationalised production and research were to be found in their new products. They were now manufacturing some 50 dyestuffs hitherto not manufactured in this country, and had improved the quality of many others. Research in the dyestuffs laboratories had also been applied to rubber accelerators, anti-oxidants, softeners, etc. They had successfully co-operated with other concerns in the search for a British-made celluloid for safety glass.

Rapid progress was also taking place in Dulux "new process" paints and varnishes, which could be applied in cases where nitrocellulose was not suitable. The range of low-freezing blasting explosives had been extended by the introduction of more powerful compositions. Special types of black powder, one for slate blasting and one for use in tropical climates, had also been developed. Improvements had been effected in rifle ammunition of the high-velocity type which had greatly increased accuracy in long-range target competitions. That had also materially improved their competitive position. They had placed on the market a solid carbon dioxide refrigerant, developed at Billingham, and sold under the name of Drikold. It would, they believed, play a large part in enabling perishable foodstuffs to be marketed in perfect condition. It had, in addition, other important industrial applications. To develop their mineral resources at Billingham, a range of new building materials based on anhydrite was now being placed on the market. He might add that the production at Billingham of general chemicals, to which he had referred last year, namely, concentrated compound fertilisers, methanol, nitric acid, acetic acid, etc., had shown substantial progress during 1931.

International Agreements

In some respects the purposes of tariffs and international agreements were in conflict. Unassisted as they had been in the past by tariffs, he and his colleagues had been convinced believers in the long-range wisdom of international agreements as instruments of world rationalisation of industry. Co-operation, they had always found, was better in the long run than competitive warfare.

In pursuance of that policy they had recently concluded an agreement, following protracted negotiations, with the Continental manufacturers of dyestuffs. For some years arrangements had existed between French, German, and Swiss makers under which they co-operated with one another and marketed their products in an orderly manner. He was inclined to think that for some time the British dye industry had been regarded as not having proved its permanence. The agreement entered into with Continental dyestuffs manufacturers was an assurance that the British dye industry had proved its permanence. It would strengthen the international position of the industry. They had also participated in another international agreement, which unfortunately was of but short duration. The International Nitrogen Convention had, during its short life, done much to assist in orderly marketing, apart from its substantial contribution towards regulating production to consumption, but negotiations last summer for the continuance of the Convention had unfortunately broken down.

On the other hand, the formation of the International Hydrogenation Patents Co. in April last was a far-sighted piece of action to avoid conflict or waste in the future world industrial development of the great scientific achievement of the production of oil from coal.

The necessity of co-operating with manufacturers in the British Dominions overseas had always been recognised by I.C.I. The ideas to be developed at Ottawa had long animated the Company's actions, so that to-day most of their practical ends had been achieved. In Australasia I.C.I. of Australia and New Zealand, Ltd., in Canada Canadian Industries, Ltd., in South Africa African Explosives and Industries, Ltd., each had factories on the spot. The Imperial character of their work had met with the sympathy of the respective Governments. Though none had escaped the ravages of 1931, the fact that each company should have been able to yield rates of return almost equal to those of 1930 was a fine tribute to their soundness and initiative. There need be no fears for their future. In other overseas markets, I.C.I. were following the same policy of close and friendly liaison with the principal makers of the same class of goods, and as world problems were solved he believed that there would be a satisfactory growth in the trade of the I.C.I. selling companies.

Prophecy was dangerous, but in his view the outlook was brighter than it had been for some time. Great Britain had regained her monetary freedom, so that industry had its future much more in its own hands. Behind the security of a tariff, industries which had not yet been able to organise themselves upon modern lines or talk upon even terms with their foreign competitors, would be able to look forward with more confidence. The sales of I.C.I. products at home were so intimately tied to the prosperity of the principal industries that everything which helped them to better their conditions should improve those of I.C.I. So far as the evidence of the early months of 1932 was available, it went to show that British industry was becoming more active. That was a hopeful augury for the year.

The economies which I.C.I. had been able to introduce were another encouraging factor. No organisation would be better equipped to grasp any and every opportunity which might present itself. But it must be remembered that I.C.I. was a great international organisation. There was not a single country of importance in the world in whose prosperity, directly or indirectly, they were not interested. Even should the reparations problem of the world be solved, there still remained a huge network of international commercial debts unadjusted to the present low prices of goods. Until some broad lines of solution were agreed upon, it was to be feared that the restrictions on international trade would be continued. In so far as that happened, the trade of I.C.I. would be affected in some part of the world or another. But it could be said that, unless some unforeseen calamity should overtake the world, the results of the Company's trading for 1932 should be at least as good as those for 1931. If the first three months were any index, they should be better.

After paying a tribute to the zeal and loyalty of the staff, the Chairman moved the adoption of the report and accounts, which was carried unanimously.

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All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2. The Postage on this issue is: Inland, 1d.; Foreign, 1½d.; Canada, 1d.

THE Budget has had a poor press, though the more loyal Tory papers have made the best of a bad job, and the incalculable *Daily Mail* is quite warm in its praise of Mr. Chamberlain. The debate in Parliament does not promise to be of any great interest. The Opposition is not strong enough to make any impression, and the grumbles of the Government's own supporters can be discounted in advance. There is a threat of an amendment to reduce the beer tax, but nobody supposes it will be anything more than an occasion for blowing off froth. The real interest for everyone, now that we know the worst and have got the order to pull in our belts, lies farther afield. War debts and reparations, the battle of tariffs, the prospects of industrial and trade recovery in Europe and America—these are the all-important questions. Whether the politicians are prepared to face them seriously we shall see in a few weeks' time at Lausanne.

* * *

The doubtful yield of a protective tariff is one of its chief disadvantages, as the United States and many other countries have every reason to know; so that Mr. Chamberlain's estimate of £27 millions, as the yield in a full year of the various new duties so far imposed, must be accepted with caution. Many authorities think his estimate is high, though it will, of course, be reached easily enough if the operation of the Exchange Equalisation Fund keeps the value of sterling low; but then expenditure will go up *pari passu* with revenue. In any case, the estimate, high as it seems to us, has come as a disappointment to Protectionists, who still believe, in the main, that they can have their cake in the form of protection while eating it as revenue. Still more disappointing is the announcement that the next batch of duties to be imposed, at the behest of the Advisory Committee, on commodities as yet undisclosed will only bring in some £5 millions. By the time these lines are in print the character of those duties will be known; it will probably be found that they are designed to cover a limited range of iron and steel products.

* * *

Liberals in the House are accepting with equanimity these successive blows of the protectionist bludgeon. Mr. Lloyd George, who knows how to bide his time, has made no gesture of leadership, and the Parliamentary Party, sheeplike as ever, has decided, apparently, that it would rather continue to be led from the rear than have no leader at all. There is thus to be a repetition of the hilarious farce that was first staged on the second reading of the Import Duties Bill. Sir Herbert Samuel, in a ferocious speech, will demolish the new tariffs from the Front Bench; his speech, it is whispered, will be an even more shattering exposition of the Free Trade case than was ever presented before. When the cannonade is over, and the huzzas have died away, the cardboard 5·9 will be wheeled back once more to the